Table of Contents

1. Allegiances
2. Prologue
3. Chapter 1
4. Chapter 2
5. Chapter 3
6. Chapter 4
7. Chapter 5
8. Chapter 6
9. Chapter 7
10. Chapter 8
11. Chapter 9
12. Chapter 10
13. Chapter 11
14. Chapter 12
15. Chapter 13
16. Chapter 14
17. Chapter 15
18. Chapter 16
19. Chapter 17
20. Chapter 18
21. Chapter 19
22. Chapter 20
23. Chapter 21
24. Chapter 22
25. Chapter 23
26. Chapter 24
27. Chapter 25
28. Chapter 26
29. Chapter 27
30. Chapter 28
31. Chapter 29
32. Chapter 30
33. Chapter 31
34. Chapter 32

35. Chapter 33
36. Chapter 34
37. Chapter 35
38. Chapter 36
39. Epilogue
40. Author's Note

Allegiances

~COPYRIGHT STATEMENT REGARDING MY WARRIORS FICS~
I am putting this here simply because it has become quite an issue lately. Please DO NOT use my original characters/clans/concepts in any of your Warriors fics. (This does not include warriors cats with the same names. I understand coincidences if we happened to pick the same names for our characters.) I work hard on my novels, and it is upsetting to witness a circumstance where the author feels they need to "borrow" ideas/characters from me because they're not creative enough. Simply stated, the Warriors world is big and complex enough for an author to be able to create his or her own characters/clans/plot. Thank you for your understanding.

~STATEMENT REGARDING GRAMMATICAL ERRORS AND COMMENTS~

Please REFRAIN from continually correcting typos and grammatical errors. I am a grammar nazi myself, and I understand some of you are too, but I have several published works and do not have time to correct EVERY error. Unless the error severely limits your understanding of the story, I will not be taking immediate action to fix these typos. Please REFRAIN from telling me "cats can't cry" and "cats can't blush" etc. These novels are a work of FICTION. I know cats can't cry and perform human-like characteristics; however, this is a work of fiction and is written in a way to convey emotion. I am sick and tired of getting comments like these because they detract from my work and make it seem like you care more about correcting typos/ (sorry) being a pompous know-it-all than reading and enjoying a work. Don't be surprised if I get sassy/sarcastic with you in the comments. I ask you refrain from making such comments on my work.

CLANS: (Only includes cats that make appearances or are mentioned)

FORESTCLAN:

Leader: Birchstar(brown tabby tom with green eyes)

Deputy: Stormfin(gray tom with green eyes)

Medicine Cat: Fishclaw(Gray tabby tom with blue eyes)

~Apprentice: None

Warriors:

Grassheart(black and white tom)

Frostleg (White she-cat with amber eyes)

Pebblefoot(golden-brown tabby tom)

Apprentices:

Leopardpaw(spotted she-cat)

Queens:

Sandnose(light ginger she-cat, almost a tan color, with green eyes. Mother to Stonekit)

Hazelthorn(brown tabby she-cat with blue eyes. Mother to Lionkit and Tawnykit)

Kits:

Stonekit (golden-brown tabby tom with green eyes)

Lionkit (ginger tom)

Tawnykit (white and brown she-cat)

Elders:

Poppystripe (brown she-cat)

Clawtail (white tom)

SNOWCLAN:

Leader: Icestar (White she-cat)

Deputy: Blacktail (black tom)

Medicine Cat: Nightwhisker (black tom with white on chest and paws)

Apprentice~Spottedmask (Snowshoe she-cat)

Warriors:

Largefoot (gray tabby tom)

Mapleleaf (maple-colored she-cat)

Snowheart (white she-cat)

Skycloud (gray tabby she-cat with white paws and chest)

Cloudfur (white tom with blue eyes)

Dovewing (ginger she-cat)

Thorndapple (brown tabby she-cat)

Longtail (tan tom with a longer tail)

Apprentices:

Smokepaw (white tom with black spots)

Lilypaw (golden brown tabby she-cat)

Queens:

Petalnose (white she-cat with one green and one blue eye. Mother to Mintkit. Expecting Longtail's kits)

Kits:

Mintkit (gray and white she-cat)

THE FOXES:

Rock: Leader. Red fox

Chase: Red Fox

Arrow: Red fox

Daisy: Red fox

Lily: Red fox

Prologue

I've had MULTIPLE comments lecturing me on how cats don't know what angels are (even though StarClan is a thing???) and thus Angelpelt is a poor name choice. So what if it is? It's a name for a *background* character.

Sandnose smiled at the little newborn kitten in her paws. She had just given birth that morning to a beautiful son. He basically resembled his father, Pebblefoot because of his golden-brown fur. His name was Stonekit. He was Sandnose's only kit, but she loved him from the moment she laid eyes on him. She licked the newborn kit affectionately.

Soon, Pebblefoot entered. The golden-brown tabby tom had been on patrols when she had given birth, so this was the first time he would be seeing the kit. A smile lit up on Pebblefoot's face as he saw his son.

"Have you named him?" he asked.

"Is 'Stonekit' alright?" Sandnose asked.

"Of course," Pebblefoot said, licking his mate's ear.

"He looks a lot like you," Sandnose said. Pebblefoot nodded as the kit slept soundly, though sadness shone through his dark green eyes.

Pebblefoot had not been the same lately. He was still charming and lovely, the same cat that Sandnose had fallen in love with, but he had become more depressed. Many moons ago his sister, Jetpelt, had died of greencough. Her only kit, Blackkit, had disappeared and the father didn't even care because he was too much in shock. His sister, Rosefur, pregnant with her mate's

kits, had been sent away for protection by her mate, Olivetail, many moons ago as well. She had returned and given birth to another litter of kits, but a fire had come in ForestClan, and Rosefur had left as did Olivetail. Rosefur did not return and neither did Olivetail. Their kits were never seen again either.

Pebblefoot did not have any other family besides Sandnose and Stonekit. He told Sandnose old stories of how his father had died when he was only seven moons. He vaguely remembered his mother. He had described her as a white she-cat with icy blue eyes, the first part of her name beginning with "ice". His father had been a dark black tom with bright green eyes. His mother had left him and his two sisters at ForestClan when he was seven moons, and he never saw his mother again. She had abandoned them, never showing her face again, even though she had promised she would.

Sandnose could relate to him though. Her past had not been well either. When her mother, Angelpelt, was an apprentice, she fell in love with a tom named Barkface. The two got along well and everyone assumed they would become mates, but Barkface quickly showed her a new side. It was a side of evil. He had apparently planned to take over the clan by killing Birchstar, the leader.

Angelpelt had become scared and she left him. She instead fell for Sandnose's father, Goldentail. Angelpelt then gave birth to Sandnose, her sister, Snowflower, her brother, Goosepaw, and her other sister, Littlekit. Goldentail was killed shortly after their birth, no doubt murdered by Barkface. The leader of ForestClan found out and exiled Barkface for what he had done.

Littlekit died of disease shortly after her father's death.

When they all became apprentices, Angelpelt decided to take Goosepaw into the woods to show him how to hunt some more. He was struggling with a move and his mentor wanted Angelpelt to help him because he believed it would be better for him if his mother was there to make him feel comfortable. Their bodies were found shortly after and brown hair was left on their wounds.

Patrols were stepped up because they knew Barkface was

still in the forest. Sandnose and her sister, Snowflower, were scared.

Many moons later, Snowflower fell in love with a cat named Treewhisker. The two were happy together and became mates. But when Snowflower went to tell him that she was expecting his kits, he wasn't in the warriors den. His body was found near the border with the same brown hair that laid on Angelpelt and Goosepaw.

Soon, night patrols were sent out to make sure Barkface did not return. Snowflower soon gave birth to two kits. Both of them were toms that resembled their father entirely. One was named Treekit, after Snowflower's mate. The other was named Bearkit. The two played happily until one day the kits wandered out of the camp for fun and both died. One of the warriors had seen Barkface leave the two dead kits, laughing as he padded away.

Patrols were stepped up even more. Barkface would not stop with his plan. Moons passed until one night, when the sisters were sleeping side-by-side. The tom entered the den and growled. Sandnose noticed and quickly woke Snowflower up.

Snowflower leapt at the tom, but Barkface was a good warrior and he knocked Snowflower off of him. "Why are you doing this?" Sandnose had asked.

"I don't want any of Angelpelt's kin surviving!" he had replied.

Right as he was about to leap onto Sandnose, Snowflower jumped in the way and he killed her instead. The cats quickly woke up and the warriors led Barkface out of the forest. Moons had passed and he hadn't returned. At least, Sandnose hoped he wouldn't return.

"What about Barkface?" Pebblefoot asked nervously, flicking his tail back and forth.

"If Barkface draws into the forest, I will take him away. He doesn't even know that Stonekit is alive."

"I better head on patrols now," Pebblefoot sighed, anxiety in

his voice. "He's a beautiful kit.I look forward to being a father."

Sandnose smiled as her mate left. She was worried though about Stonekit. Barkface couldn't know of his existence. If he was reported, Sandnose would leave the clan and make sure Stonekit was safe. She couldn't have her one and only son killed. It took her moons for Pebblefoot to convince her to have kits, since Sandnose had argued that Barkface would surely kill her kits if she had some. She didn't want to admit that she was right.

Sandnose closed her eyes and drifted off to sleep. She awoke in StarClan. Blue lights dazzled. Lovely trees and a soft mist came into a view. A pure white she-cat came forward. "Angelpelt?" Sandnose asked, forgetting her mother had patches of brown on her body.

As her vision became clearer, she noticed it was the SnowClan leader, Icestar.

SnowClan was in a clan far away. Icestar claimed that Sandnose was a cat that Icestar had seen in her dreams named Sandpelt.

Many visions had come, and Sandnose discovered that Sandpelt was actually an ancient cat that had died ages ago. Sandnose was a reincarnation of Sandpelt, though she was much different. Sandpelt's visions hadn't affected Sandnose in any way since Sandnose had much worse memories. As for her dreams, she and Icestar would meet up in their dreams every once in awhile. Sandnose enjoyed the times they did, since she didn't have any good friends. No cat would step near Sandnose, scared that if they became friends with her, Barkface would kill them.

"Why are you here, Icestar?" Sandnose asked.

"Your ForestClan ancestors have asked me to convey a prophecy to you."

"Why couldn't they have come theirselves?" Sandnose asked.

Icestar shrugged. "I'm not exactly sure why. But here it is: In

the clan of forests, one kit shall be born of stone. His life may seem short, but another life he will live as well. Prospering in two different worlds, the stone shall live on and return happily bringing happiness to his clan."

"What does that mean?" Sandnose asked.

Icestar shrugged. "I do not know for sure, but it is time I told you the truth."

"What truth?" Sandnose asked.

"I am Pebblefoot's mother."

Sandnose gasped.

"You must not tell him of this. It might interfere with the prophecy."

"I won't," Sandnose said, promising she would not let it slip.

Icestar faded and soon Sandnose awoke in her nest. What did the prophecy mean? His life may seem short. Did that mean Barkface would kill him? She did not know. She didn't want to know. It hurt her too much.

Chapter 1

I know cats don't open their eyes this early. Please refrain from lecturing me about it in the comments. I was thirteen when I wrote this.

Stonekit opened his eyes. He had decided it was time to see the new world. He wanted to explore his new home. His mother, Sandnose, looked down at him. "You've opened your eyes!" she said.

Stonekit smiled at her. "I thought it was time."

"Already making decisions for himself," a nursery queen, Hazelthorn, said.

"And only a day old," Sandnose smiled.

Stonekit smiled and began to explore the nursery, sniffing around. Hazelthorn's kits, Tawnykit and Lionkit, were almost six moons. They sat talking to each other about what it would be like when they were apprentices.

Stonekit saw the two talking as an opportunity for some fun. He quickly padded over to the two large kits who towered over him. "Want to play?!" Stonekit asked.

Tawnykit and Lionkit rolled their eyes. "Please," Tawnykit said. "We're almost apprentices. We don't 'play' anymore."

Stonekit shrunk down and padded back to his mother. Sandnose looked down sadly at him. "Why don't you go explore camp?" Sandnose asked.

"Yay!" Stonekit exclaimed and quickly padded out of the den. Where should he go first? The medicine cat den? The elders' den? There was so many places to choose from. He ran off when suddenly he ran into a brown tom.

"Well look who's awake," the tom said.

"Hi," Stonekit mewed, scared of the large leader who towered over him, shielding the sun from Stonekit's eyes.

The leader, Birchstar, laughed at the tom. Stonekit padded off into the warriors' den before he ran into another cat.

"Hi!" Stonekit yowled, awakening the sleeping cats.

One of the warriors, Grassheart, groaned. "Why do these kits have to be so annoying by waking us up?"

His mate, Frostleg, laughed. "Stop being such an grumpy warrior, Grassheart. Don't you remember your first day in camp?"

Stonekit padded off before he caught his reply. He neared the apprentice den, ready to meet his clanmates. He gasped as he was pushed over by the apprentice, Leopardpaw.

"Oops! Sorry, Stonekit!" she said, her spotted pelt gleaming in the sunlight.

Stonekit smiled. "That's okay!" Nothing could kill his mood today.

Soon enough, he was greeted by the deputy, Stormfin. "You're the deputy!" Stonekit gasped.

Stormfin laughed. "Yes, I am."

"How do you become deputy?! I want to be deputy someday!"

"Well it takes a lot of hard work and effort," Stormfin replied. "You have to be ready for anything."

"Wow! Thanks, Stormfin!" Stonepaw replied and padded off, Stormfin's "words of wisdom" repeating in his head.

He continued his exploration as he came into the medicine cat den. Fishclaw, the medicine cat, sat, studying his herbs.

"Hi!"

"Hello, Stonekit!" Fishclaw said, not looking up from his herbs.

"What are you doing?" Stonekit asked.

"Just checking my inventory," Fishclaw said.

"Isn't it boring being a medicine cat?" Stonekit asked.

"No. I get to cure cats and help save them. It's the best job in the world." Stonekit couldn't imagine how curing cats could be fun, but he padded out until he came to the last den. The elders' den.

"Hello?" he said as he padded inside, his voice echoing in the large den.

"Hi there!" Poppystripe said.

"Look at this fine kit," another elder, Clawtail said. "Have you come to hear a story?"

"Story?" Stonekit replied.

"Poppystripe tells the best stories," Clawtail said.

"Oh, stop it," Poppystripe laughed. "I only tell good stories because I've been alive forever!"

"Can I hear one?" Stonekit asked, sitting down on the den floor.

"Well alright," Poppystripe said. "Back in the old days, Birchstar was only a warrior. His mate, Honeyspots, had just given birth to four new kits. It was the season of leaf-bare, so there wasn't much food to go around. Honeyspots got ill, as did her kits. Honeyspots and three of her kits died shortly after. The only one that survived was a tom named Barkkit. Barkkit always thought StarClan had killed his family, so he blamed StarClan constantly. It wasn't too bad at first, but then he fell in love with a she-cat named

Angelpelt. But Angelpelt had become terrified by his bad behavior, so she left him. Barkface got mad, and he tried to kill every member of Angelpelt's family. Birchstar had no choice, but to exile him. It broke his heart, but he knew he was making the right choice."

"Did Barkface kill everyone?"

"No," Poppystripe said. Why was she acting so nervous?

"Thanks for the story," Stonekit said and padded out of his den. That Barkface sure was a bad cat. He tried to kill everyone in Angelpelt's family! Stonekit would never be like that. If he ever saw that cat, he would make sure Barkface left the forest forever.

He curled up next to Sandnose when he heard a yowl. "HE'S BACK! HE'S IN THE FOREST! PEBBLEFOOT IS INJURED!"

"Daddy!" Stonekit gasped.

Chapter 2

Stonekit rushed behind his mother as they made way to the medicine cat den. Stonekit trembled. What if his father had died? How had he become injured? What would happen now?

But Stonekit was relieved when he walked inside the den to see Pebblefoot alive. Sandnose licked him affectionately. "Daddy!" Stonekit said and ran to his father. His father smiled at him.

"How is he, Fishclaw?" Sandnose asked the medicine cat.

"He had a nasty wound up his leg, but I've been caring to it, and he will survive. I expect Birchstar will be sending out more patrols," Fishclaw said.

"Why?" Stonekit asked.

No cat replied to him but instead looked away from the kit. What had Stonekit said that had made them not want to answer? He wasn't even sure how his father had become injured in the first place!

"What happened?" Sandnose asked nervously.

"We were leading patrols as always and I saw him. He recognized me immediately
and-," he was cut off by Sandnose's words.

"Stonekit," she began, "why don't you step outside for a moment and go play with the other kits?"

"Why?" Stonekit grumbled.

"Daddy and I have to have an adult talk."

Stonekit sighed and padded out of the den. What was with all these secrets? Stonekit had only been alive for a day and secrets were already being kept from him. Something was not right.

Stonekit padded over towards Tawnykit and Lionkit, but the two almost-apprentices rolled their eyes and padded away.

Stonekit sat down by the den, sighing. It was Leopardpaw who approached him.

"What's the matter, Stonekit?" the spotted she-cat asked.

"Sandnose and Pebblefur aren't telling me something," he said.

Leopardpaw almost showed the exact same face that Sandnose and Pebblefoot had made when Stonekit asked questions,

but it quickly turned to a smile. "Oh, I'm sure they're just trying to keep you safe."

"Safe from what?" Stonekit asked.

Leopardpaw pondered for a few moments. "Well there's all sorts of danger in the forest. They probably were just making sure you didn't wander in there yourself."

"Oh," Stonekit said. He was about to speak again when Sandnose padded out of the medicine cat den and called Stonekit towards her.

"Bye, Leopardpaw!" Stonekit waved his tail and padded off leaving the spotted she-cat behind.

Soon, the sun began to set. Sandnose curled up in her nest while Stonekit curled up against her. He quickly fell asleep to the warmness his mother brought upon him. Glancing at the den one last time, he curled up closer to his mother, and slept.

Stomp stomp. Stomp stomp. Stonekit opened his eyes to see he was no longer in the den, but in the forest. The sky was dark and no stars shone. The trudging of a cat carrying him had woken him up.

Curious to know who it was, Stonekit quickly realized it was his mother carrying him around the woods at night. But why? Why was she carrying him?

"Mommy?" Stonekit asked.

Sandnose sat Stonekit down. "Oh, you're awake. Here, let me put you on my back." She lifted the tom on her back and Stonekit clung to his mother's fur in the cold air.

Stonekit was about to ask why she was walking in the woods, but he was tired. He nestled into his mother's fur and fell asleep once again believing it was only a dream.

Sunlight caused Stonekit to open his eyes. He knew it. It was just a dream. He was back in the den in ForestClan. Yawning, he suddenly realized something. The nest he was in was empty. None of the smells were familiar.

He quickly noticed the white she-cat, pregnant with kittens with a white and gray kit lying beside her. Her eyelids were closed, and she slept soundly.

"Where am I?!" he yowled and sat against the wall.

The pregnant she-cat opened her eyes, awoken by the

kitten's yowl. She yawned loudly and then spoke. "I was wondering when you would realize. You're in SnowClan."

Chapter 3

"SnowClan?! Where's my family?! Where's my mommy?!" Stonekit raced around the den frantically while the she-cat stood and watched, almost laughing at him.

The clan and family he had known for a mere day was already dissapearing from him. Who was the deputy of his old clan again? What was the name of that other queen?

"Icestar!" the white she-cat hissed.

Icestar padded into the den. "Oh, Stonekit, you're awake."

"How did you know my name?!" Stonekit gasped.

"You were left here last night. SnowClan is your new home now," the she-cat said.

"But what about my old clan?! I'm so confused!" Stonekit yowled.

His yowls awoke the older kit sleeping nearby. She opened her eyes and looked shocked to see Stonekit standing there.

"This is your home now," Icestar said and lightly touched her tail to his shoulder. "It's time you met the other clanmates."

Stonekit was confused. His past clan was slipping away from him. It was as if he was born here. Was he? Had the day before been a dream? No, it couldn't have been. Icestar said herself that he had been left here.

Before Stonekit could speak, the white cat spoke. "I'm Petalnose," the pregnant queen said. "This is Mintkit," she said, pointing to the white and gray she-cat.

Mintkit let out a smile. She was a large kit and would surely become an apprentice soon. It looked as if Petalnose's kits would be

born in a moon or so.

Icestar led the tom out of the nursery to the camp. Cats bounded everywhere, unlike in his old clan where few cats were seen. SnowClan was a very large place.

"This is our deputy, Blacktail," Icestar said, pointing to a black tom. The black tom stood, calling out patrols to cats nearby.

"Blacktail, this is Stonekit. You remember him from last night."

Blacktail nodded. "Hello, Stonekit. Nice to meet you. You'll love it here at SnowClan!"

Stonekit nodded, although he wasn't sure yet. Would he like it here? This would be his home.

"This is Nightwhisker, our medicine cat," Icestar said.

The black and white tom stood with his apprentice who was a Snowshoe she-cat. "Hi! This is Spottedmask, our medicine cat in training," he said, pointing to the she-cat that stood beside him.

There were so many cats. How could Stonekit remember them all?!

He spent the remainder of the time meeting the apprentices, warriors, and elders. He had already seemed to become familiar with the clan already, unlike his old clan where he didn't even remember which den stood where. For some reason, he seemed much more at home here than his other clan.

Stonekit padded into the nursery and slept soundly on his nest. He liked it here. He liked it here a lot.

Chapter 4

Almost a moon had passed since Stonekit's arrival in SnowClan. It had been fun in SnowClan, despite how lonely he was at times. Sometimes he still called for his mother, though he barely even remembered her. The good news was that Petalnose's kits would be born at anytime, so he would have a playmate or two.

But Stonekit's past had been fading. Who was the leader of his old clan again? What was the name of his clan? What were his parent's names?! What was his father's pelt color? All he remembered was that ginger fur on his mother. Maybe that was a dream too. He didn't remember any names from his old clan.

Stonekit had spent weeks trying to recover the few memories he had of his old clan. But, since he had only known the cats there for a day, there was no way he could remember. He would try to hold on to his mother's pelt color forever though.

There was only one thing Stonekit knew about his life. *Hi, I'm Stonekit. I was born in a different clan far away from here. My mother was a ginger she-cat. My mother left me here in SnowClan and never came back* he said to himself. He had been telling himself these same thoughts for weeks now. He wasn't even sure if he had siblings!

His thoughts came to an abrupt end as Petalnose let out the "birth of kits" yowl. "MY KITS ARE COMING!" the white queen yowled.

Many cats rushed towards the nursery including her daughter, Mintpaw, whom Stonekit had just learned that she was her daughter not too many days ago. Apparently, Petalnose had mated with a rogue, but he left her, so she was left to take care of Mintpaw. It was Longtail, her mate, who was also rushing towards the den, who made her happy again. She was giving birth to Longtail's kits at the very moment Stonekit was having these thoughts.

Many cats were shooed out of the den, but Longtail got to stay. Stonekit stood by Mintpaw and her friend, Foxpaw. Stonekit noticed Petalnose's siblings, Cloudfur and Skycloud, by the den as well.

"IT'S A TOM!" The first yowl came from the nursery. Stonekit couldn't even see the new kit.

"A SHE-CAT!" Were there any more kits?

"ANOTHER SHE-CAT!" How many kits was Petalnose having? Surely this was the last.

"LAST ONE! IT'S A TOM!" Four kits. How could Petalnose handle so many including Mintpaw?

As cats began to clear and family members saw their kin, Stonekit was allowed back int the nursery where he stared at the new SnowClan kittens. They wouldn't open their eyes for a little while, so all was quiet...for now.

"What are their names?" Stonekit asked.

Petalnose pointed to a ginger tom. "This is Blazekit. He was the first born, and he's the biggest."

Petalnose then pointed to a gray tabby she-cat. "This is Riverkit. She's the biggest she-cat, but her brother," she pointed to a white tom, "Cottonkit, is a little bit bigger than her."

Lastly she pointed to a small white and gray she-cat. "This is Ivykit. She's the smallest, but I'm sure she'll make a good warrior. She looks just like my mother, you know."

"My mother had a ginger pelt," Stonekit said.

"I'm surprised you still remember your mother," Petalnose remarked.

Anger spiked through Stonekit's pelt. He had every right to remember his true family. He let himself calm down before he spoke again. "That's the only thing I remember."

Petalnose didn't speak anymore, too fixated on watching her kits. The other kits squirmed constantly, but Stonekit kept looking intently at Ivykit. She was so calm and slept peacefully.

Icestar walked into the den. "My, what beautiful warriors they will make!" she exclaimed.

"Thank you, Icestar," the white queen replied, trying to calm her squirming kits.

Icestar then turned to Stonekit. Stonekit had been growing a bond with the leader. She was like a mother to him at times now. "Stonekit, why don't you come into my den tonight? I want Petalnose to get some rest."

"Okay," Stonekit said. He bounced beside Icestar as they came into the leader den. It was vacant except for an old nest that Icestar slept in.

The sun had fully set now, only the moon and stars shining light onto the clan. Icestar curled up in her nest, leaving just enough room for Stonekit. He curled up next to the she-cat and felt the warmth of her fur. He felt a distant memory of his mother as he had curled up next to her and felt immediate warmth.

Icestar wasn't his mother of course, but she reminded him of his. Stonekit felt happy around her. Stonekit's eyes drooped as these thoughts circled his brain. Giving one more yawn, he shut his eyes, and fell asleep.

Chapter 5

It had been about a week since the birth of Petalnose's kits. Ivykit had turned out to be mute, but Stonekit didn't care. He still liked the she-cat, and he had to admit, he was starting to fall in love with her. Ivykit was obviously the quietest of the litter, due to her inability to speak, but she was also the kindest.

He had already begun to play with the kits. Blazekit and Riverkit seemed to go off on their own, but Stonekit had lots of fun with Cottonkit and Ivykit.

The only bad part was that Petalnose had left the previous night to go after Longtail who had escaped to BloodClan. The kits had begun to worry, and Stonekit didn't know how to comfort them.

"What if she doesn't come back?" Cottonkit asked.

Ivykit nodded.

"She will. She has to come back. She's your mother, right?" Stonekit didn't really agree with what he had said. His mother, with a ginger pelt (he had still remembered), had left him in SnowClan and never returned.

"I guess," Cottonkit said. Ivykit nodded as well.

Yowls came from the camp. As if on cue, Petalnose entered the camp. Stonekit was shocked by what he saw and had to turn away. The she-cat had been covered in blood with wounds covering her body.

"MOMMY!" Riverkit yowled. The four kits ran out, but Stonekit had to stay inside. He didn't know how much it hurt to see a kit's mother die. Another thought hit Stonekit. What if his mother had died?

Stonekit approached the camp and sat down next to Icestar who was yowling at Thorndapple. Petalnose's sister, Skycloud, was yowling too. Stonekit heard the whispers of Skycloud and Petalnose.

It was obvious that Petalnose would not survive. Just one look at the wounds could tell you that they were fatal. Stonekit heard Petalnose calling for Longtail but her mate did not come. Thorndapple had disappeared. The murderer.

Ivykit, Cottonkit, Blazekit, Riverkit, and Skycloud buried their noses into her fur. Suddenly, a tan cat with a long tail came bounding in. It was Longtail. He had just missed the last chance to see his mate.

"PETALNOSE!" he screeched.

Stonekit couldn't watch. Icestar had noticed, and she wrapped her tail around him. "Don't look," Icestar said. "It will only make you hurt more."

Tears slid down Stonekit's face. How could they all be dealing with this? There was only one thing that Stonekit knew. There would be no more playing for awhile.

The elders buried her body, leaving the cats to sit vigil. He heard Skycloud whispering a lullaby to the four kits. She must have promised to look after them. What a great sister.

Stonekit was still curled up in Icestar's tail. "Can I sleep in your den tonight?" Stonekit asked Icestar. He had been sleeping in her den every other night now, but it had almost been constant.

"Yes," Icestar said. "Come on," she said, waving her white tail.

Stonekit followed after the old she-cat. He curled up right next to her.

"Why does StarClan do that?" Stonekit asked.

"Do what?" Icestar replied.

"Make bad things happen. Petalnose didn't do anything wrong!" Stonekit said.

"It isn't StarClan's fault," Icestar said. "It was Petalnose's destiny. She was born to die that way. We all have a destiny. Some could've been prevented..."

"So it was my destiny to not have any parents?" Stonekit asked.

Icestar nodded. "Sleep now, Stonekit. You'll tire yourself out with these thoughts."

Icestar began to sleep, but Stonekit stayed awake, sickened at the sight of seeing Petalnose's body. He looked outside, seeing Skycloud with the four kits, Cloudfur, Longtail, Smokepaw, and Mintpaw standing next to the grave. A part of Stonekit wanted to stand there with him, but he was not close to Petalnose. He was only close to her kits.

He remembered that day he had shown up in SnowClan. Stonekit had gasped when he saw Petalnose in front of him. A single tear slid down Stonekit's cheek and dropped onto the cold den floor.

"Good-bye Petalnose," he whispered. "I hope you're happy."

He closed his eyes and slept, almost crying himself to sleep.

Chapter 6

It had taken a moon or so for Cottonkit and Ivykit to start playing again. Stonekit would ask them every day if they wanted to play, but the two would refuse, still depressed by their mother's death. Longtail would rarely visit them since he was in shock too. But after a few weeks, they would toss a mossball around and let Stonekit join in. They would chase each other's tails. Soon enough, their laughter filled the nursery again. Stonekit's friends were back.

Stonekit awoke. The leader's den was empty. No doubt that Icestar was already performing duties. He slept in her den every night now. Icestar told him that once he became an apprentice, he would have to sleep in the apprentice den. As much as Stonekit didn't want to leave her den, he agreed.

Stonekit padded out of the leader's den. A chill ran down his pelt, causing him to stop in his footsteps. Leaf-fall was almost here.

"Hi, Cottonkit!" Stonekit waved his tail at the white tom.

"Hi, Stonekit! Wanna play?" he asked.

"Sure. Where's Ivykit?" Stonekit asked.

Stonekit had grown a crush on the mute she-cat. They were only friends for now, but maybe when they were older, they would be mates.

"She's still sleeping," Cottonkit said.

"Well let's wake her up!"

The two padded inside, careful not to wake Skycloud, who was watching over the four kits. Ivykit slept by Skycloud's side,

curled up in Skycloud's gray fur. Cottonkit waved his tail in front of Ivykit's nose. Ivykit let out a large sneeze and her eyes opened up.

Cottonkit laughed and Ivykit rolled her eyes. She stood up and shook her pelt off, which was covered in moss.

"Let's play!" Stonekit said.

Ivykit nodded and the three padded outside. Warriors and apprentices were already busy patrolling and hunting. The camp had cleared and left only a few cats left.

"So, what do you want to play?" Cottonkit asked.

"Do you guys want to play the leader game?" Stonekit asked. He and Ivykit adored that game, although Cottonkit found it a little boring.

"I guess," Cottonkit sighed.

Ivykit put her tail on Cottonkit's shoulder and smiled. "You really think it will?" Cottonkit asked.

"Um...who are you talking to, Cottonkit?" Stonekit asked.

Cottonkit looked at Ivykit, and Ivykit let out a nod. "Well," Cottonkit began. "Ivykit and I can read each other's minds. That's why we have such a good relationship. I can understand what she says."

"That's so cool!" Stonekit exclaimed.

"Sorry if you've heard me talking really randomly. That was actually me talking to Ivykit. StarClan gave us the gift of reading minds because of Ivykit's condition. I'm her mouth, I guess."

Ivykit laughed and nodded.

"Let's play!" Stonekit said.

"I'm Stonestar!" Stonekit proclaimed. "Ivykit, want to be my deputy?"

Ivykit nodded.

"Well I'm the evil Cottonstar!" Cottonkit laughed. "I'm going to attack your clan, Stonestar!"

"No you won't!" Stonekit growled. "StoneClan! Attack!"

Stonekit and Ivykit leapt onto Cottonkit. Stonekit gently bit his ear, while Ivykit pawed at his belly.

Cottonkit laughed. "Alright! Alright! I surrender! You win for now, Stonestar!"

Stonekit and Ivykit jumped off Cottonkit, who was still laughing.

"Great job!" Stonekit said to Ivykit.

Ivykit dipped her head as if she was saying thanks.

Night had begun to fall, and Icestar was in her den. Stonekit padded inside, smiling. He laid down next to her on the nest.

"There you are!" Icestar said. "Did you have fun today?"

"Yes!" Stonekit said. "Cottonkit, Ivykit, and I played lots of games! Being a kit is so much fun! I can't wait until we're all apprentices."

"You realize that once you are an apprentice, you can't play anymore. You have to learn to be a warrior," Icestar said.

"But we could train together!" Stonekit suggested.

"That's if all three mentors agree. I'm sure Cottonkit and Ivykit will train together since they are siblings, but you might just be trained on your own, Stonekit."

"No more playing?" Stonekit asked.

"When you become an apprentice, you have bigger responsibilites. Once you become a warrior, you have even more

responsibilites. There is no more playing. Cherish the memories now," Icestar said.

Stonekit frowned. Being an apprentice didn't sound like much fun now. He would barely get to see his friends.

There was a long silence before he spoke again. "Why are you acting like a mother to me, Icestar?"

There was another pause. "Well, I never had kits of my own, so when you came, I knew it was the perfect opportunity to raise you."

"Why didn't you have kits?" Stonekit asked.

"I decided to become a leader. Kits and a mate would...would get in the way," Icestar said, hesitating while speaking.

"Do you know who my parents are?" Stonekit asked out of the blue. It was an odd question, but Stonekit was curious.

"No," Icestar said. "Your mother didn't tell me her name or where she had come from. She just told me to keep you safe."

"Safe from what?" Stonekit asked.

Icestar didn't reply. "Why don't you sleep?"

Icestar had fallen asleep in a few minutes, but Stonekit couldn't let go of the conversation they had had. His mother was just trying to keep him safe? Stonekit was confused. He gasped, thinking of a distant memory, more like faces, of cats who had been keeping secrets from him.

Chapter 7

"ALL CATS OLD ENOUGH TO CATCH THEIR OWN PREY JOIN BENEATH THE HIGHROCK FOR A CLAN MEETING!" Icestar yowled.

Stonekit bounced with excitement. Today was his apprentice ceremony! He was sad to leave his friends behind, but he had anticipated this moment forever. He would still see Ivykit and Cottonkit though. When he wasn't doing some training, he would go play with them. He had promised he would, and Stonekit never broke his promises.

"Stonekit has reached six moons which means he is ready to become an apprentice," Icestar began.

As if on cue, Stonekit padded up the rock, smiling at the cats before him. Icestar smiled down at him.

"Stonekit, from this day forward, until you receive your warrior name, you shall be known as Stonepaw. And now for your mentor."

Stonepaw looked into the audience. Who would his mentor be? Cloudfur? Largefoot? Oh, there were so many choices! He was hoping he'd get a good warrior.

"I have decided that since you seem to listen well and take advice from me, I will mentor you," Icestar said.

Stonepaw gasped. "Really?" He had never expected Icestar to mentor him! He knew he would enjoy his apprentice days with her, especially since she acted like a mother towards him.

Icestar nodded. Full of excitement, Stonepaw touched noses with Icestar and the clan began to yowl,"STONEPAW! STONEPAW!"

Stonepaw smiled to the clan, them smiling back at him. He noticed Cottonkit and Ivykit looking at him as well. He waved his tail and they waved back, proud of their friend.

Two weeks had passed since Stonepaw had become an apprentice. He had only learned some hunting and fighting moves, mostly just being taught to gather moss for the elders.

As for his friends, he barely saw Cottonkit and Ivykit anymore. He missed them terribly and at often times was lonely, even with Icestar around.

Stonepaw padded out of the apprentice den to see another new sunny day. One of the last sunny days of green-leaf. Leaf-fall would be upon them soon and then leaf-bare.

Stonepaw spotted Icestar and padded towards her. "I'm ready to work," Stonepaw said.

Icestar smiled. "We're going to practice some tree climbing moves today. After that we can just head back to camp. I know you haven't talked to Cottonkit and Ivykit in awhile, so I want you to have a chance to talk to them again."

"Thanks!" Stonepaw exclaimed. He had been waiting to speak with his friends for awhile now and he appreciated that Icestar was going to let him.

He followed his mentor into the woods until they came upon a large tree, full of thick branches that a cat could easily sink its claws into.

"Watch carefully," Icestar said. She began to climb up, branch by branch, sinking her claws into the tough bark. She got up about halfway, then carefully came back down.

"Climb onto each branch," she said. "If you can't reach a branch, then jump. Sink your claws into the bark -make sure you can first- and then jump onto the next branch from there."

"Okay," Stonepaw said. He felt apprehensive about this. What if he fell? He knew Icestar would be there to catch him

though. She was always looking out for him.

Stonepaw nervously climbed onto the first branch. Then the second. When it came to the third, he couldn't reach. He sunk his claws into the bark. It was steady enough to hold him. Stonepaw jumped, sinking his claws into the bark, then the branch. He did this continually until he was at the same spot that Icestar was.

"Great job, Stonepaw! You are a great tree climber! I've never seen an apprentice do that in one try. You've got some real talent."

"Thanks!" Stonepaw said.

"Now ease down," Icestar said.

Stonepaw carefully climbed down each branch. He jumped onto one branch, but lost his footing. He hung with his claws strapped to a branch. "HELP!" he mewed.

Icestar quickly climbed up the tree as Stonepaw held on for dear life. She stood on the branch beneath him. "Let go!" Icestar said.

"Are you sure?" Stonepaw asked.

"Trust me," Icestar said. Stonepaw gulped, and let go, landing on the she-cat's back.

"It can be tricky sometimes," Icestar said. "Just stay on my back as we get down."

Stonepaw felt like a kit as Icestar carried him down. Suddenly, Stonepaw gasped. This felt familiar, except he wasn't on Icestar's back. He must've been on his mother's back! He remembered something! He remembered riding along his mother's back in the woods at night! Was she taking him to SnowClan? Maybe it was somewhere else. All Stonepaw knew was that this memory was real. He had kept one memory! *Hi, I'm Stonepaw. I was born in a different clan. Many cats kept secrets from me. I rode on my mother's back on the way to SnowClan. My mother had a ginger pelt. I was left in SnowClan and my mother didn't come back because she*

wanted me to be safe he thought. The clues were coming together now!

Stonepaw got off of Icestar's back. "Well I think that's enough for today," Icestar said. "Let's head back to camp."

The two headed back to camp, padding through the forest. Once Stonepaw set foot in camp, he ran to the nursery. "Cottonkit! Ivykit! Let's play!"

Cottonkit and Ivykit smiled and ran out of the den. They would be apprentices in a few weeks, so then they would be able to train with him quite soon.

"How come you aren't doing apprentice duties?" Cottonkit asked.

"Icestar decided to let me see you guys today since I haven't talked to you in a while."

Ivykit smiled.

"Ivykit's happy," Cottonkit said.

Ivykit nodded.

"Want to play mossball?" Stonepaw suggested.

Cottonkit nodded. "I'll get the moss."

Cottonkit padded off while Stonepaw was left with Ivykit. The two had grown on each other, becoming better friends each day. "So, Ivykit," Stonepaw said. Ivykit looked at Stonepaw with her bright eyes. "Do you have a crush on anyone?"

Ivykit laughed, her whiskers twitching in amusement. She pointed her tail at Stonepaw.

"So you don't?" Stonepaw laughed.

Ivykit laughed again and pointed to Stonepaw.

"I like you too, Ivykit," Stonepaw said.

Ivykit smiled as Cottonkit returned with moss in his jaw. He shifted the moss into a ball with his claws and tossed it around.

"Is being an apprentice cool?" Cottonkit asked.

"I guess," Stonepaw said, tossing the ball to Ivykit. "But you have to do a lot of stuff. I had to pick ticks off of Blossom all morning yesterday. She kept complaining about her moss."

"What about fighting and hunting moves?" Cottonkit asked.

"I've only learned a few," Stonepaw said. "I learned some tree climbing moves today."

"Did you fall?" Cottonkit asked.

"Well, almost. I climbed up the tree no problem. Getting down, I slipped. Icestar caught me though. She said I had a natural instinct of climbing trees," Stonepaw said.

"Well you must've gotten that from your old clan. Us SnowClan cats aren't very good at climbing trees," Cottonkit said.

"I am a SnowClan cat!" Stonepaw hissed.

Ivykit put her tail on Stonepaw's shoulder to calm him down. "I mean, it doesn't matter where you are born. It matters which clan you are loyal to," Stonepaw said.

"I guess," Cottonkit replied.

Ivykit nodded.

"Ivykit agrees with you, by the way," Cottonkit said.

"Thanks," Stonepaw said to Ivykit.

He couldn't understand why Cottonkit had called him a cat from another clan today though. He was a SnowClan cat. Sure he hadn't been born here, but he had spent all his life here. It didn't

matter what Cottonkit said, he was a SnowClan cat through and through.

Chapter 8

"Stonepaw! Get up!" Icestar yowled from outside the apprentice den. Another few weeks had passed since Stonepaw had become an apprentice and he had been working non-stop. The only good part was that Cottonkit and Ivykit would be made apprentices very soon.

Stonepaw awoke to see the apprentice den empty. The other cats were already up and had gone. He sighed, knowing Icestar would be mad that he overslept. Stonepaw padded out of the den, grumbling. "Sorry," he grumbled. "I was just so tired from those fighting moves yesterday."

"A warrior is never late," Icestar said. "You need to learn how to wake up on time.You aren't a kit anymore."

"Sorry," Stonepaw said. It seemed like Icestar was drifting even farther away from him. All she talked about was being a warrior now. Cottonkit and Ivykit barely spoke to him. Life wasn't fun anymore. He felt like he was trapped, and everyone wanted him to do one thing, but he really wanted to choose for himself.

They padded out into the forest, a few leaves falling off some trees. "I want to show you something," Icestar said. They padded past their normal training spot and came into a thick rush of trees and bushes. Stonepaw gasped to see all the rabbits and squirrels eating from the bushes. The birds chirped in the trees, their sweet songs filling the air.

"There is so much prey here!" Stonepaw gasped. "We need to hunt here! We could be fed all the time!"

Icestar shook her head. "That's what I thought at first, but do you smell those scents?"

Stonepaw sniffed. "Smells like foxes."

Icestar nodded. "Exactly. Foxes surround this place. They eat the prey from here. I don't want to endanger any cats. One fox we could get rid of. Maybe even two. But there's a whole bunch of them living beyond these bushes."

"Oh," Stonepaw said. "That's a shame."

Icestar nodded. "Exactly. Come on. Let's hunt."

The clouds began to form as Stonepaw and Icestar hunted. Stonepaw caught a few mice while Icestar caught a huge squirrel and rabbit. Soon, there would be not a lot of prey. Leaf-bare would be in a few moons, and the race to survive would be on.

They returned back to camp with their prey, and Stonepaw ate a rabbit alone while the other cats talked. Stonepaw sighed. He felt more lonely than ever.

He finished his rabbit and padded into the apprentice den. "Hey, Stonepaw!" Smokepaw, one of the almost-warriors, said.

"Hey, Smokepaw." Stonepaw sighed and layed down in his nest. Depression had come over him and it was affecting him badly.

Stonepaw closed his eyes and fell asleep, trapped in the dark world that he was living in with no light that shone whatsoever.

Pitter patter. Pitter patter. Stonepaw opened his eyes. It had begun to rain. The rain touched the ground, and Stonepaw noticed the ground was damp. Stonepaw's nest was slightly soaked and it tickled his fur. He groaned.

What was the point of life anymore? Icestar just lectured him. Blossom would yowl at him to get better moss. Cottonkit barely spoke to him since the "non-SnowClan cat incident", and Ivykit, who claimed she liked Stonepaw, barely made eye contact with him.

"No one likes me anymore," Stonepaw whispered.

Furious, Stonepaw padded out of the apprentice den and

out into the forest. The trees shaded him from getting his pelt wet by the evening shower. Stonepaw knew exactly what he was going to do. He was going to that hunting place infested with foxes that Icestar had shown him previously that day.

It was hard to find the place in the dark. Everything looked so different and odd. Soon enough, Stonepaw had found the ideal hunting place.

He stepped inside. All the rabbits and squirrels had taken cover. The birds were nested inside the hollow trees. It was as if all life had fled from the grounds that had held such copious amounts of prey earlier.

Stonepaw sat in the center of the hunting grounds, waiting. He knew exactly what he was waiting for. He began to yowl loudly, seeing if anything would notice.

Stonepaw smiled when noises came from the bushes and an angry fox padded out. Stonepaw stood up nervously and faced the fox, a smile spreading across Stonepaw's face.

The fox growled at him and leapt, snarling at him as if he was telling him to get away. Stonepaw didn't move. He would not fight. He had to do this right. The fox tore at his pelt, ripping fur from him. Stonepaw yowled in pain, but did not fight back. He remained limp, letting the fox do whatever he wanted to him.

The fox clawed at his ear, leaving a nick in it. Blood and rain mixed together. Stonepaw was dying and he knew it. Suddenly, the fox clawed his neck. Stonepaw saw the world one last time, the rain dripping down onto his bloody pelt. Then he blacked out.

Chapter 9

When Stonepaw opened his eyes again, he was laying in a calm clearing. A very calm clearing. "Hello?" Stonepaw called, wondering if there were any cats nearby.

A glowing white she-cat padded forward. "Hello, Stonepaw," she said with a smile.

Stonepaw tilted his head in confusion. "Who are you?" The white she-cat looked familiar. "Icestar, is that you?"

The she-cat shook her head. "No. My name is Stonecloud. I'm Icestar's mother. I am one of the oldest cats here in StarClan.

"You mean I'm dead?!" Stonepaw gasped.

Stonecloud nodded. "Follow me."

Stonepaw followed the white she-cat until they came to a large pool of water. "Watch the water," she said.

Stonepaw looked into the water until it came into view of SnowClan. It was morning now and the cats were just waking up. Stonepaw saw Icestar looking around the camp, no doubt looking for him. The rain must've washed away his scent.

"Stonepaw!" Icestar yowled, looking around for her apprentice. She sighed and padded out to the forest. "He must be in here," she whispered to herself.

Stonepaw didn't want to watch anymore. He didn't want to see how she reacted to his dead body. It would hurt him too much.

Icestar continued looking in the forest, calling for the apprentice who was missing. The last place she checked was the hunting place that Icestar had shown him that previous day. "Stone-," she gasped as she saw his broken dead body lying on the

ground. She padded over to the tom. "STONEPAW!" she screeched.

Stonepaw looked away and turned to Stonecloud. "Do I have to watch this?"

Stonecloud let out a nod.

Stonepaw gasped as Icestar stood by his body. She held her claw up to her throat and slit it. "WHAT IS SHE DOING?!" Stonepaw gasped.

"She's coming to see you," Stonecloud replied, sorrow in her mew.

Suddenly, Icestar's glowing figure appeared in SnowClan. "Stonepaw! What happened?!"

"I'm sorry," Stonepaw said. "I-I killed myself."

Icestar's sorrow turned to anger as her pelt spiked with anger. "WHY WOULD YOU DO THAT?! DO YOU HATE SNOWCLAN?!"

"No-I," Stonepaw began, but Stonecloud cut him off.

"Icestar, your new life is almost developing. Stonepaw will visit you in your dreams sometime soon. Good-bye," she said.

"MOTHER!" Icestar hissed, but she slowly faded away.

A few minutes of silence passed. No cat spoke. Not after what had just happened. Stonecloud turned to Stonepaw again. "Look back into the pool."

The scene shifted, showing Icestar returning back in camp with his body. She was in tears and was beside herself. Her sister, Blossom, had to come and comfort her. Stonepaw couldn't bear it as Ivykit and Cottonkit padded out of their den. Cottonkit looked down sadly while Ivykit screamed and mewed.

Why did I kill myself? Stonepaw thought. *Everyone I care and love is going mad over my death.*

Stonepaw knew what he was asking was impossible, but he asked it anyway. "There's no way I can return?" he asked.

Stonecloud hesitated for a minute, but shook her head. Stonepaw sighed.

Stonecloud noticed his hurting. "Come on. Let's meet the other cats of StarClan," she said, leading him to a large group of cats.

"Okay," Stonepaw said and bounded after her, though he didn't really want to.

They came upon a large group of StarClan cats, all of them glowing in many bright and different colors. He gasped as he recognized a white she-cat.

"Petalnose!" he gasped.

"Stonepaw? I never expected to see you here," Petalnose replied.

"I didn't either," Stonepaw whispered.

Stonepaw turned around and recognized yet another cat. "Blacktail?" The former deputy stood before him. Icestar hadn't assigned a deputy since his death because she was waiting for a sign from StarClan.

"Stonepaw? Why are you here?" he asked.

"I was killed by a fox," Stonepaw replied.

"That's a shame," Blacktail said.

Stonepaw sighed again and faced the ground. A tail touched his shoulder. Stonepaw turned around to see Petalnose again. "Want to come meet my family?"

"Sure!" Stonepaw said.

Petalnose smiled and led Stonepaw over. "This is Rosefur,

my mother," she said, pointing to a white and gray she-cat. She then pointed to a white and gray tom. "That's Olivetail, my father."

A white and gray kit and a beautiful gray tabby she-cat that looked like an apprentice padded out from a bush.

"The kit is Mousekit," Petalnose said. "The apprentice is Oceanpaw."

"Hi," Oceanpaw said. "How did you die?"

"I was killed by a fox," Stonepaw said.

"I was killed in battle," Oceanpaw replied. "Well it was nice meeting you," she said and padded off with her family.

"I have a cat I want you to meet," Stonecloud said. She led Stonepaw to a dusty brown tom. "Stonepaw, this is Chesnuttail. Chesnuttail, this is Stonepaw."

"Hey, Stonepaw," Chesnuttail said.

"Chesnuttail has had a lot of drama going on," Stonecloud said.

"Well," Chesnuttail began, freely beginning to spill his life story. "See, I used to be in love with this cat named Hollypaw. Then I fell in love with this cat named Cloverpelt and became mates with her. Shortly after my death, Hollypaw said she was expecting kits. Cloverpelt told Hollypaw that Cloverpelt should raise the kits because an apprentice giving birth to kits was never a good thing in the clan. Hollypaw gave birth to my two kits-Rosepaw and Nightpaw. But when Cloverpelt was expecting my kits, Hollypaw told them the truth. Rosepaw took it well, but Nightpaw didn't. Cloverpelt had three kits-Chesnutkit, Willowkit, and Redkit. I have five kits, but I haven't been able to raise or see any of them," he sighed.

"That's horrible!" Stonepaw gasped.

"If only the portal opened," Chesnuttail sighed.

Stonepaw turned to Stonecloud. "What's the portal?"

Stonecloud sighed. "Why don't you get some sleep?"

Stonepaw sighed and padded to a nest. He laid down and slept. But the thought of some mysterious portal seemed to keep him awake for awhile. What did they mean by "portal"? What could it be?

Chapter 10

Stonepaw had spent the next few days meeting cats and learning about StarClan, though nothing was particular interest to him. Stonecloud was kind to him, just like Icestar had been to him. He enjoyed seeing Petalnose too. But a simple question question rang through his ears though. *Is my family here?* he thought.

Stonepaw yawned and got out of his nest, glancing around the starlit forest. He found Stonecloud by the river, licking her paw gently.

"Hi, Stonecloud," he said, looking at the white she-cat.

The white she-cat looked up, removing the paw from her mouth. "Hello, Stonepaw. I think it's about time I told you something."

Was it about the portal that Chesnuttail had mentioned? Stonepaw was still curious and exhilaration fled through him. Maybe it was about his family. Maybe it was nothing important at all.

"Well you know about the Dark Forest, right?" Stonecloud asked.

"Yes," Stonepaw replied. He had been told stories by Petalnose about the Dark Forest in the nursery. Cottonkit had even made up his own stories at times.

"If you ever happen to end up there, which I hope you don't, don't talk to a cat named Moonstar," Stonecloud warned.

"Why?"

"About seven moons ago, there was a huge battle between her clan and FoxClan and SnowClan. Moonstar died, but she still lurks in the Dark Forest, ready for revenge," Stonecloud said.

"I won't talk to her," Stonepaw promised.

"Good," Stonecloud said.

"Um...Stonecloud?" Stonepaw asked.

"Yes?"

"What did Chesnuttail mean when he talked about the portal?"

Stonecloud hesitated for a moment and sighed. "I didn't want you to know about it. Once cats find out about it, they just sit there waiting. It barely even opens. Stonepaw, the portal can take you back to your clan. It gives you a second chance. You could go back...alive."

Stonepaw gasped, beginning to bounce up and down. "Really?! Oh, this is so exciting! I could see Icestar again! I could see Ivykit and Cottonkit again!"

"Don't waste your excitement on it. It happens to very few cats. The only cat that has gone through that portal is Olivetail."

"Olivetail came back from the dead?" Stonepaw asked.

"Not really," Stonecloud said. "He used to be an ancient leader of another clan. He had a mate whom he loved too. Shortly after becoming leader, he was killed nine times by another cat. His mate, who was expecting kits, was killed too. It wasn't until Rosefur was an apprentice that the portal opened for him. He couldn't say he was the ancient leader or else cats would think he was mad. He just said he wished to join the clan and he changed his name to Olivetail."

"So it might open years from now?" Stonepaw asked.

Stonecloud nodded. "I wouldn't waste your time on it. Don't go looking for it either."

Stonepaw sighed. "Alright," he said.

He was about to move when he heard a loud noise, followed by a large blue circling light. "What's going on?!" Stonepaw gasped.

"It's the portal," Stonecloud whispered.

"For me?!"

Stonecloud shook her head. Stonepaw realized who the portal was for as he saw the blue lights flashing at a silhouette. Chesnuttail stood right beside it, a smile lit up on his face.

"Good-bye!" Chesnuttail said. "I'll be off raising my kits! I'll be back sometime though!"

"Bye!" Stonecloud called.

Chesnuttail entered through the portal and was gone in a flash. It was all silent again. Stonepaw looked at Stonecloud.

"Okay two cats, but that's very rare! Another can't won't go in there for ages," Stonecloud said.

Stonepaw sighed. The portal would never open for him. Sure he had lived a short life, but Stonecloud was right. Petalnose had kits to raise too, but the portal never opened for her. Blacktail had left his mate, Skycloud, even though he hooked back up with his old mate, Thorndapple, in StarClan.

Stonepaw sat, staring into the distance. He would be stuck in StarClan forever waiting moons for someone he loved to join him.

Chapter 11

"Are you ready?" Stonecloud asked.

Stonepaw nodded. Tonight, Stonecloud would be letting Stonepaw appear in Icestar and Ivykit's dreams. He had been practicing for awhile now and tonight, Stonecloud was letting him transport for the first time.

"When you close your eyes, think hard about that one cat. You should be able to make your way into their dreams since you aren't ready to appear to cats yet," Stonecloud said. "Try it. Since you're just beginning, you'll only have a little bit to talk. Try to be fast on what you say. Ready?"

Stonepaw nodded. He closed his eyes and concentrated deeply on Icestar. He thought of how she cared for him. He thought of all the training they had done. He thought of the first day he met her. Her gleaming white pelt and ice-blue eyes were implanted in his mind. When he opened his eyes he was in a different part of StarClan. He was in a clearing by a river. He pricked his ears, hearing the slow and steady rushing of the water.

"Icestar?" he asked.

The white she-cat came out of nowhere. "STONEPAW!" she gasped and ran to him, knocking him over. Stonepaw laughed, a laugh he had not made in awhile.

"Hello, Icestar," Stonepaw said. "I only have a short amount of time."

"Why did you kill yourself?" Icestar asked, furious with the tom.

"I felt alone. You would just lecture me. I never got to see Cottonkit and Ivykit. I loved Ivykit and she loved me, but we never spoke. Thank you for losing a life to see me."

"You should've never killed yourself, Stonepaw," Icestar said.

"I know. I regret it everyday. Thank you for taking care of me, Icestar. I love you so much. You were like a mother to me."

Icestar smiled. Her last words were muffled as Stonepaw disappeared, and instead of Icestar, Stonecloud appeared.

"How'd it go?" Stonecloud asked.

"Good," Stonepaw said. "I'm ready to see Ivykit."

"You know what to do," Stonecloud said.

Stonepaw concentrated hard on Ivykit. He thought of how they played together. He thought of the day that Ivykit confessed her love to him. He thought of her deep blue eyes and her stunning pelt color of silver and white. When he opened his eyes, he was in yet another part of StarClan. This time he was in a meadow, filled with butterflies. He spotted the white and gray she-cat chasing a nearby butterfly, laughing and pouncing..

"Ivykit!"

The she-cat turned around. Stonepaw gasped as she let out a word. "STONEPAW!"

Stonepaw stopped in his tracks. "Wait, you can speak?"

"In StarClan, I can," Ivykit said. "Just like how a blind cat can see in StarClan."

"I only have a short amount of time," Stonepaw began. "I just wanted to say that I'm sorry I left you. I never should've died."

"It wasn't your fault," Ivykit said, resting her tail on the tom's shoulder..

"Yes, it was. I let a fox kill me because I was suffering from depression. Ivykit, I love you so much. I always hoped we would be mates again."

Ivykit still looked shocked from Stonepaw's confession of his death. "I-I l-love you too," she stammered.

She drifted away and Stonepaw's head swirled. When he could finally see again, he was with Stonecloud.

"How was it?" Stonecloud asked.

"Ivykit still loves me!" Stonepaw said.

"You know she'll eventually move on, right?"

"What-what do you mean?" Stonepaw asked.

"You're dead, Stonepaw. Ivykit will find another cat. It's her destiny."

"But-but she loves me," Stonepaw said. What did she mean that Ivykit would move on? They loved each other and that's what mattered.

"She might love you at the moment, but she'll eventually move on and meet other cats," Stonecloud said.

"I-I don't believe you!" Stonepaw hissed. He was hurt. No, Ivykit would love him forever! She'd surely never have a mate or kits, right? Furious, he ran deep into the forest.

"STONEPAW! COME BACK!" Stonecloud yowled.

Stonepaw kept on running until he came to a darker and more silent part in the forest. Stonepaw sat, looking down. He suddenly heard some leaves crunching behind him. Stonepaw turned around and gasped.

"Hello, Stonepaw," a silver-blue she-cat said.

"Who-who are you?" Stonepaw stammered, backing away from the mysterious cat.

"My name is Moonstar," the she-cat said.

"Stonecloud told me not to talk to you!" he hissed.

Moonstar laughed. "You silly apprentice. There are two Moonstar's. There's one that lives in the Dark Forest. I'm an ancient Moonstar from ages ago. I used to lead another clan."

"So you're not the Dark Forest cat?" Stonepaw still had some suspicions about this Moonstar. He knew something was up by the way her green eyes twinkled, almost mocking him.

"No, I'm a StarClan cat," she said.

"Why are you here?" Stonepaw asked.

"I think I might be able to help you with your problem," Moonstar said.

"What problem?" Stonepaw asked.

"Well you want to portal to open for you right? You want to get back to Icestar and Ivykit, correct?"

Stonepaw nodded. "Wait...how do you know about me?"

Moonstar laughed. "All StarClan cats know about each other. I know of another portal."

"Another portal! Well why didn't you say so?" he asked.

"Follow me," Moonstar said. Stonepaw followed her until they came upon a large black swamp. It didn't seem like much of a portal, but Stonepaw would do anything to get back.

"This is the portal?" Stonepaw asked.

"Yes," Moonstar said. "It doesn't look as lovely as the other one, but it still works. No cats know about this portal except me. I knew you needed to get home somehow, so I made sure I could find you."

Stonepaw still didn't trust the she-cat completely, but this had to be the portal, right? He needed to get home to stop Ivykit

from being mates with another cat. "So, what do I do?"

"Well, you jump into this black swamp. Let it pull you under. Don't struggle. It might mess something up, like you'll end up in the clan with three legs. Are you up for it?"

Stonepaw hestitated for a minute. This cat could be lying. Yet again, he had to get home. "I'm in," Stonepaw said.

"Good," Moonstar said. "Jump."

With much hesitation, Stonepaw jumped in. The black substance choked at him, making Stonepaw gag. Stonepaw knew he couldn't struggle though. He was completely still, letting the substance gobble him up. The last thing he heard was Moonstar's laughter and a twinkle of red in her eyes.

When he opened his eyes, he was back in the hunting grounds. He seemed a lot taller than he was. "I must've grown," Stonepaw said. Suddenly he gasped. His brown tabby fur was replaced with ginger fur. His tail was bushy with white on the end. He was a fox!

Chapter 12

"MOONSTAR!" he growled. He swept his tail on the ground and groaned. "Oh, no. Oh, no. Oh, no," he whispered to himself. That was the Dark Forest Moonstar all along. Why had he fallen for such a stupid trick? Sure he was alive now, but he was a fox!

"Hello?"

Stonepaw gasped as he saw another older fox looking at him. "Why are you yelling?" she asked.

"Um, no reason," Stonepaw replied.

"My name is Chase. I've never seen you here before," she said.

"That's because I'm not really a fox! I'm really a cat! Another cat turned me into a fox! I belong to the clans!"

Chase laughed. "My, you young foxes and your imagination. That's silly talk. What is your name?"

If he told Chase his warrior name, she would laugh again. It was probably a good idea to make friends while he was a fox. He sighed. "My name is Stone."

"Nice to meet you Stone. Where are you from?" she asked.

"Um...another forest far away. I came here looking for new foxes," he said.

"Well you've stumbled into our hunting grounds. Follow me," Chase said.

Stone nervously followed Chase behind some bushes. He was shocked when he saw a vast landscape full of foxes and their burrows. It stretched out for miles.

"Fox paradise, huh?" Chase laughed. "Come on, you should meet some of the foxes."

Stone followed Chase until they came upon an old red fox. "This is Rock, my mate," Chase said.

"Who have you brought, Chase?"

"Another fox. He claims he's from far away. We have some open burrows, don't we?"

"Indeed. Good to meet you, Stone. I hope you'll join us on the annual hunt," he said. "New-leaf is coming, and soon the vixens will be expecting."

Stone was utterly confused. What was the annual hunt? "S-sure. I'd love to come," he stammered.

"Great," Rock said.

"Rock leads them every year. He's basically leader you could say," Chase whispered.

Chase led Stone away from Rock until they came upon a beautiful red fox. "Lily, would you come here?" Chase asked.

"What is it, Mother? Who is this fox?" Lily asked.

"This is Stone. He's from another forest. He'll be staying in these territories for awhile. Stone, this is my daughter, Lily."

"How do you do?" Lily asked.

"I'm good," Stone said. "It's a big place you've got here."

Lily nodded. "I'm lucky to be raised in such a lovely landscape."

Chase smiled. "Well, I'm introducing Stone to the different foxes. At least, the ones whose burrows are near here. There are so many foxes!"

Stone nodded and followed Chase until they came upon yet another two foxes. They were both red foxes

"This is Daisy," Chase said, pointing to the red fox. "Daisy, this is Stone."

"Hi, Stone," Daisy said.

"This is her mate, Arrow," Chase said, pointing to the darker red fox.

"Hi there," Arrow said. "Will you be joining the other males for the annual hunt in new-leaf?" he asked.

Stone nodded.

"Well, I guess I'll find you an empty burrow now," Chase said. "I'll make it close to the foxes you've met since those are the only ones you know at the moment."

Chase looked around until she found a small, empty burrow, just the right size for Stone. It was only a few yards away from Lily's burrow.

"Well, I'll leave you to rest," Chase said. "It must've taken awhile to get here."

"Thanks," Stone said.

"Oh and one last thing," Chase said.

"What?"

"Beware of the greenish-yellow moss. It's deadly poisonous. Just touching it could kill you," she said.

"I'll stay away," Stone said.

"Good," Chase said and wandered away.

Stone sighed and laid down in his burrow. How long would he be a fox? He couldn't contact StarClan at all. Stonecloud would do something, wouldn't she? Stone sighed. He only knew one thing that he could do. He was going to go to SnowClan at sunrise to ask a cat for help.

Chapter 13

When Stone awoke, it was sunrise. The foxes were full of chatter. Stone padded out of his den. He saw Chase, Rock, and Lily chatting.

Stone padded over.

"Oh, good morning, Stone!" Chase said. "Rock was just telling one of his stories."

"Join us," Lily said. "We have plenty of fresh squirrel."

"Thanks," Stone said.

He sat down next to Lily. "As I was saying," Rock began. "I had scented some cat earlier that morning."

"Ugh, not this story again," Chase groaned. "You know I don't like this one."

"Oh, hush," Rock said. "Stone hasn't heard it before. Anyway, I had scented some cat earlier that morning. It had begun to rain, and I couldn't sleep. I did what I always did. I went to the hunting ground to look for some prey. Early morning food is always a great surprise to foxes. There he was. Just sitting there. The cat looked like a kitten. He had brown tabby fur and bright green eyes. All he did was stare at me."

Stone gulped. Was he talking about what Stone thought he was talking about?

"Chase had already told me that she heard another cat talking about how it was fox territory. I knew that kitten was stealing all the prey. So I leapt at him. He let me attack him. He didn't fight back at all, the wimp. I killed him, just like any fox would." Chase raised her eyebrow. "Well, except you Chase. I don't understand your soft spot for cats. I came back with no prey, but a

great story."

Stone gulped. Rock had killed him. The fox he had trusted had turned out to be his murderer. Stone wanted to murder Rock right now, but then he remembered that he had let Rock murder him.

"Those clan cats can be interesting," Lily said.

"Stone was telling me a funny joke the other day about how he was a clan cat," Chase laughed. Rock and Lily laughed as well.

"You know, I'm really glad that old fox taught me how to understand cat."

"You know how to speak cat?" Stone asked.

Lily nodded. "Mother can speak it fluently."

"I heard that the leader is dying as we speak. Some of the cats were talking about it," Chase said.

Stone's eyes went wide.

"Are you okay, Stone?" Rock asked.

"I just need some um water. I'll be right back," he said. He slipped into the bushes. Icestar was dying! He had to go help her!

He looked back one more time to make sure the foxes weren't staring at him. Then he leapt off.

He ran through the forest, never stopping. Mice and squirrels stopped in their tracks. Plants were crushed to the ground.

"ICESTAR! I'M COMING!" Stone yowled.

He soon reached the camp. Many cats gathered near Icestar's den. "Icestar!" he gasped. Without thinking, he ran into the camp to poke his head in.

"FOX!" Stone gasped around as his clanmate came near him.

He saw Cottonkit and Ivykit, who were surely apprentices now, cowering in fear.

"Ivykit! Cottonkit! It's me!" he yowled.

The cats couldn't understand him. "Smokefur! What should we do?" Cloudfur asked. Smokefur must've been named deputy.

Stone stood as the cats neared towards him.

"ATTACK!" Smokefur yowled. The cats pounced on Stone. Stone whimpered as they clawed his pelt. Stone knocked the cats off and ran away. The cats followed him. Stone continued to run until he came to the hunting grounds. The patrol stopped, knowing more foxes were nearby. They growled and padded off.

Stone sat down and licked his wounds. He had some fairly deep ones. He padded back into the territory of foxes.

Lily's eyes widened. "What happened?" she asked and padded towards him.

Chase padded forward as well.

"It's nothing, really," Stone said. "I went too far into the cat's territory and they attacked me," he said.

"Come with me," Chase said. "I'm a healer. I can help you."

Stone sat in a clearing as Chase applied herbs to his wounds. At first they stung, but soon he felt indulged by the comfort they brought.

"Feels good, doesn't it?" Chase asked.

Stone nodded.

"You should really go to the pond in our territory next time you need water," she said.

"I will," Stone said. He was still depressed though because he hadn't got to see Icestar. He knew for a fact she was on her last

life. He would never see her again.

"Well you're good to go," Chase said.

"Are you sure he's alright?" Lily asked.

Chase nodded. "Stop your worrying. He'll be fine. Bye, Stone," Chase said.

Why was Lily so worried about him? Stone padded away until he heard the conversation.

"Why are you so protective?" Chase asked.

"You know why, Mother. I told you last night."

"Because you fancy him," Chase laughed.

Was it true? Did Lily like him? Stone padded away before he could hear anymore. Lily was being nice to him. She *was* a beautiful fox. Stone smiled at the thought. Was he falling in love with her?

Stone sighed and padded off into the territory to hunt. The thought of Lily still made him smile though. For once, he didn't think of Ivykit.

Chapter 14

Stone awoke the next morning. Chase, Rock, and Lily were all eating again. Stone glanced to see Arrow and Daisy chatting as well.

"Good morning, Stone," Lily said.

"Are your wounds any better?" Chase asked.

"Oh yes, they're much better," Stone said. "Thank you."

"You're such a weird fox," Rock said to Chase. "You have a soft spot for cats, you know how to speak cat, and you are a healer. But that's why I love you."

"Aw...thanks," Chase said, nuzzling her mate.

"This is disgusting," Lily whispered to Stone.

Stone laughed.

"Want to ask Daisy and Arrow if they want to go hunting?" Lily asked.

"Sure," Stone said following Lily.

"Hey, Lily. Hello, Stone," Daisy said.

"Do you guys want to go hunting with us?" Lily asked.

"Sure," Arrow replied.

The four foxes padded into the forest to hunt. Daisy shivered. "I hope leaf-bare ends soon. I'm freezing my fur off," she said.

Arrow brushed his pelt against her. "Don't worry, I'll keep you warm," he said.

"Thanks, dear," Daisy said, licking her mate's cheek.

Stone looked at Lily. She seemed to admire the relationship the two foxes had. She was probably wishing for a mate of her own.

"I smell a squirrel," Arrow said. He leapt into the bushes and came back with a squirrel moments later.

"Good catch!" Stone said.

"Eh, it was nothing," Arrow said, picking up the dead squirrel.

Stone looked up to see a bird branching on a tree. "I'm going to get that bird," Stone said.

"Do you have bees in your brain?" Lily asked. "Foxes can't climb trees!"

Stone ignored her and leapt branch to branch until he came upon the bird. He leapt, catching the bird between his paws. He gasped as the branch broke. He began to fall to the ground.

Daisy and Arrrow raced around, throwing moss on the ground. Stone landed hard on the ground.

"Are you alright?!" Lily gasped.

"I'm fine," Stone said, dropping the dead bird.

"I've never seen a fox do that before," Arrow said. "Where did you say you were from again?"

"Um...," Stone began.

"Look!" Daisy gasped. "Is that a hot spring?"

Arrow laughed. "That's a pond. But that doesn't mean we can't jump in."

Arrow leapt into the freezing water, laughing. "Hey, it's actually not so cold." The sun was beating down on the water

causing it to warm up.

"I'll come in too," Stone said. When he entered the water, it was cold, but not as cold as he expected. He stood next to Arrow.

"Why don't you ladies come in?" Arrow asked.

"Um, I'd rather not," Daisy said. Arrow laughed and pulled her in.

Daisy shrieked and ran out of the water. Arrow and Stone laughed. "Are you coming in, Lily?" Stone asked.

"Why not?" Lily said, entering the water. She stood next to Stone. Stone splashed her and Lily laughed.

"Hey! I didn't say you could do that!" Lily splashed him back and the two laughed.

After awhile, Lily left the water and sat next to Daisy, talking.

"That's a fine fox you got there," Arrow said.

"Oh we're not mates," Stone said. "Just friends."

Arrow laughed. "Please, I've been in love before. It's obvious you two like each other. Daisy and I started out as just friends too, but now we're mates. What do you think they're talking about?"

"I don't know. The weather?"

Arrow laughed again. "See the way Lily is looking at you. She obviously loves you. I would love her back if I were you. She's such a fine fox. She and Daisy have been friends since birth."

"Maybe I could get to know her better," Stone said.

"That's the spirit!" Arrow said. "Lily was always so sad before you showed up. After Daisy and I became mates, she felt like a third wheel."

"Well there's no guarantee," Stone said.

"I'm sure you'll be mates one day. Maybe you'll even have little fox kits running around," Arrow said.

"Maybe," Stone replied.

Chapter 15

A moon had passed since Stone had turned into a fox. He had no idea how to turn back into a cat, but he wasn't worried. He had been hanging out with Lily, Arrow, and Daisy for most of the time.

The chills of leaf-bare were to end soon. Maybe he would find a way to change back then. In the meantime, however, he had been entirely fixed on Lily. He had fallen in love with the vixen, just like Arrow had said. He was sure that she had fallen in love with him too.

Arrow and Daisy had gone out hunting in the sunset, leaving Lily and him alone. Stone suspected it was all part of Arrow's plan.

"Hey, Lily," Stone said. The moon had just begun to shine on them. He padded across the thick snow that had covered the ground only days ago. This would surely be the last snowfall of leaf-bare.

"Hey, Stone," Lily said, looking up into the moon.

"The moon is really pretty tonight," Stone said.

Lily nodded. "I wonder why Arrow and Daisy haven't gotten back yet."

"They probably want to be alone," Stone said. "They can't have us following them all the time."

Lily laughed. "We should take the full moon as an advantage. Want to go in the meadow? It will be easier to see it there."

"Sure," Stone said as he followed Lily into the forest.

As they walked, they quickly came across Arrow and Daisy who were playfully pawing at each other.

"Hey guys!" Arrow said as Daisy bit down on his ear. "Hey!" Arrow said and pawed at Daisy lightly.

"Where are you off to?" Daisy asked.

"The meadow," Lily replied.

Daisy and Arrow exchanged glances with each other. No doubt they were glad that Lily and him were falling in love.

Lily and Stone continued walking. "You know, I've always sort of been jealous of them," Lily said.

"Why?" Stone asked.

"They're just so perfect for each other. I feel so lonely when I'm around them. I feel like there's no fox for me," she said.

"That's not true," Stone said.

Lily sighed. "Maybe it's not. I just wish he was here."

Stone could tell she was in a bad mood. "Tag!" he said, touching her tail.

Lily's frown turned into smile. She raced after him. Together they rolled through the snow, having fun.

After awhile, they sat in the cold. Lily shivered and Stone moved more towards her. "Maybe we should go," he said.

"No," Lily said. "I like being here right now, with you."

"Y-You do?" Stone asked. "Do you feel the same way I feel about you?"

"How do you feel about me?" Lily asked.

Stone gulped. Should he confess his love right here? It was now or never. "I love you," he said.

Lily's eyes sparkled in the moonlight. "I love you too," she said.

Stone smiled. They got out of the snow and shook their pelts off. "Lily, I've loved you for awhile now and it's just....well, will you be my mate?"

Lily smiled even more. "Of course I will, Stone!"

The two foxes raced around again, laughing. They laughed and cheered as they came near the burrows as well.

"Well, where do we sleep now since the burrows are too small?" Stone asked.

"I know the perfect place," Lily said. She led him more near Daisy and Arrow's burrow. She stood next to a large pile of leaves.

"Well?" Stone asked.

Lily moved the pile of leaves to reveal a large den. "I discovered this when I was just a fox kit. I've been saving it. Now it's our den."

Stone smiled. They crawled into the den and slept side by side, filling the cold den with warmth. Was this how it would've felt if he and Ivypaw had become mates? Stone would never know. He was happy here. Moonstar's curse had turned out more like a blessing.

Chapter 16

As the snow faded away, the soil became soft. Flowers grew tall and wide. Grass had regrown. The branches of bare trees bloomed into blossoms and leaves. Streams overflowed with the melting snow. The sun shone brighter. Birds chirped in their nests. It was the season of love. New-leaf was here.

Stone and Lily had been mates for about a moon. When Arrow heard, he bragged about how he knew it would happen. Daisy congratulated her friend. Stone and Lily were happy.

Stone sighed at times though too. The annual hunt would be soon. All the male foxes would leave to hunt. They wouldn't return home until the beginning of green-leaf. He would miss Lily, but Arrow would be with him. It would be Arrow's second hunt away from Daisy.

Stone awoke to see that Lily was already out of the den. Lily and Daisy were chattering away with each other.

"Good morning," Stone said.

Lily and Daisy couldn't keep smiles off their face. What were they so excited about. "I see you guys are in a happy mood," Stone said.

"Daisy's expecting!" Lily gasped. "Isn't it exciting?!"

Daisy laughed. "Oh not as exciting as the other thing!"

"Um, what other thing?" Stone asked.

"Lily's expecting!" Daisy said.

Stone gasped. His mate was expecting *his* fox kits.

"I can't believe were expecting at the same time," Daisy said to Lily.

"Does Arrow know yet?" Lily asked.

Daisy nodded. "I told him when he woke up this morning."?

Lily padded over to Stone. "Are you alright, sweetie?"

Stone nodded. "Yes, I'm fine. I just can't believe your expecting. I'll be gone when they are born."

Lily nodded.

"How long until they are born?"

"About a moon and a half," Lily said.

"I'll be gone by then," Stone sighed.

Lily touched her tail to his shoulder. "Don't you worry. Male foxes don't normally raise their fox kits. They're usually off hunting. You'll return in green-leaf though. They'll be about five moons old, but you'll still get to see them. Now don't you worry anymore. I'll be fine."

Daisy nodded. "She's right. We'll both be fine. Chase is excellent at delivering."

"Okay," Stone said.

Lily and Daisy continued talking to each other about their new fox kits that would be born shortly.

Arrow padded by him. "Exciting, isn't it? Too bad we won't get to see them until they're almost fully grown."

"Does every fox do this?" Stone asked.

"Do what?" Arrow asked.

"Go on an annual hunt?"

"No," Arrow said. "In fact, we're pretty weird to do this. It was one of the ancient foxes idea to do it a long time ago. See, our ancient fox ancestors were worried that their wouldn't be enough

food for all the foxes and the kits. That's why they sent all the males to find food elsewhere and kept the females to find food in these forests. Most foxes wouldn't stay in a group like this either. Since we have the hunt though, we have to stay together."

"Oh," Stone said.

"Wait," Arrow said. "Wouldn't you know this? You lived in a different forest."

"Well, I wasn't exactly sure because I left when I was old enough and..."

"Oh well," Arrow said. "Come on, let's race to the pond. First one there is a rotten squirrel."

Stone laughed and raced through the woods with Arrow. His mind was full of thoughts of cats though. How could he be a father if he wasn't even really a fox? What could he teach his children? Something told him that staying here wasn't the right decision.

Last chapter for today. Just so everyone knows...I know foxes don't really live like this and have an "annual hunt". it was just something I made up. I tried to explain it in this chapter :)

Chapter 17

Weeks had passed, and as Stone awoke, he knew that it would be the last time he saw Lily before he returned from the hunt.

"Good morning," Stone said.

Lily's stomach had been growing as the kits grew inside. "Good morning," she said.

The sun was just rising. Stone was required to be up bright and early in the morning. Rock didn't want to leave any later than sunrise.

Stone and Lily padded out of the den. Arrow was already saying his goodbyes to Daisy, wishing her the best luck while giving birth.

"I guess this is good-bye," Lily said looking down.

"Hey," Stone said. "I'll be back soon. When I'm back, the kits will almost be fully grown and bouncing around. You'll be an excellent mother."

"Really?"

Stone nodded. "Of course. I'll miss you and I love you."

"I love you too," Lily said, nudging her mate one last time.

Stone padded over to Daisy. "It's about time that my friend came over and wished me good luck," Daisy laughed.

"Well, good luck giving birth Daisy. I'm sure your kits will be fabulous too," Stone said.

"Good-bye, Stone. Good luck to you! I hope to see you and

Arrow soon!" The she-foxes waved the males good-bye.

"Off we go!" Rock yowled as the foxes began to march away from their home. Stone glanced at Lily one last time. She and Daisy seemed to be in tears.

Stone smiled one last time, and then disappeared into the woods.

Weeks. That's how long they had been hunting. Stone and Arrow had stuck together the whole time. It was fun hunting. They got to explore so many places. Stone had never had such a full belly in his entire life.

They were traveling to a nearby meadow today. It was supposed to contain the best rabbits in the entire forest.

"Hungry for rabbits?" Arrow asked.

Stone laughed. "I'm stuffed. I don't think I can eat anymore."

"Well you can't turn down the rabbits," Arrow said. "I remember tasting them last year. They were the most delicious prey I had ever tasted in my life."

"Fine, I'll try them," Stone said.

There was a long silence before Arrow spoke again. "I was right you know."

"About what?"

"You and Lily. It felt like only yesterday in leaf-bare when you two were falling in love. I was right now. Once we return home, it'll be you, Lily, and your children. Just like I thought."

"Okay, fine. I guess you're right," Stone said.

"How many kits do you think you'll have?" Arrow asked.

"Please tell me it's just one," Stone groaned.

Arrow laughed. "Well, it's most commonly three to five. I guess you'll be hoping for three."

"Wait. Does Lily have any siblings?" Stone asked.

"She had two brothers. They moved away once they were old enough. Chase was heartbroken, but she has Lily. I guess it's all good. Do you have any siblings, Stone?"

Stone nervously tried to think of something. "Um, I have three sisters and another brother. They all live in another forest."

"I just had a sister and a brother," Arrow said. "My sister died from the moss a long time ago. My brother left to another forest as well."

"Oh, that's a shame," Stone said. "I've never even seen the moss. Where is it?"

"Oh it doesn't grow until new-leaf," Arrow said. "The sad part is that the kits are growing up around that time. We lose many kits to that moss."

Stone was about to reply when he saw the meadow.

"We're here!" Rock yowled.

Stone and Arrow raced into the meadow. It was full of rabbit holes. Rabbits raced around. Quick and fast, Stone killed one. Despite his full stomach, he sunk his teeth into the rabbit. Arrow was right. It tasted delicious. He gobbled up the entire rabbit, leaving the fur and bones behind.

Arrow came out of the bushes with two rabbits. "Look what I caught! Want to share?"

Stone shook his head. "They're really good, but I'm stuffed. I won't have to eat for moons."

Arrow laughed and the two friends sat in the meadow eating rabbits and having fun.

Chapter 18

Awhile had passed. Stone and Arrow had explored many new hunting places. After the meadow, they had gone to a waterfall, then to a thick forest, and all the way to grassy hilltops. They were now heading to rocky cliffs to catch some large birds.

Arrow and Stone knew that Lily and Daisy had probably already given birth, so they were nervous, hoping everything had gone well.

"We're almost there!" Rock called.

Stone viewed the rocky cliffs ahead. Large birds swooped and clung to the branches of the trees.

"How will we climb that?" Stone asked.

"You caught that bird when you first came," Arrow said. "I bet you could catch a bird here too."

"Maybe," Stone said.

As they came nearer, Arrow stopped. "What is it?" Stone asked.

"I smelled a weird scent. It was probably just the birds," Arrow said. They continued walking.

They neared the cliffs, ready to start hunting.

Rock stopped just like Arrow had done earlier. "There is a weird scent here," Rock said. "Be careful everyone."

Arrow and Stone padded by, looking for birds to hunt. They looked around for awhile and gasped as an arrow almost hit Stone's head.

"HUNTERS!" Arrow gasped.

Foxes began running and broke out into a pandemonium as hunters shot at the foxes, killing them on the spot.

"RUN!" Arrow gasped. They ran, dodging arrows here and there.

"EVERYONE TO THE FOREST!" Rock yowled.

Suddenly, Arrow and Stone were surrounded. The arrow was pointing straight at Stone's heart. Arrow growled. "NO!" he growled. He leapt in front of Stone as they shot.

"Arrow!" Stone gasped.

The fox was dying. "Go. Run," he whispered.

Stone ran past his dying friend and leapt over the hunter. He ran from them. They were right on his heels. Stone yowled as an arrow went into his leg.

His pace slowed down. Stone was almost to the forest when he tripped and landed into a net.

"Help!" Stone yowled.

No fox came to help him. They ran by fast, leaving the injured Stone in the net. The hunters drew near, smiling at him.

"NO! DON'T!" Stone yowled, knowing the twolegs had no idea what he was saying.

They smiled at Stone and pointed the arrow straight at his chest. Stone gasped and yowled as the arrow went through his chest. Stone fell over on the net, covering the white net with his blood.

"Lily," he whispered. "I love you."

He glanced at the world one more time, only to see Rock's horrified face from up above. Then it went black.

Chapter 19

When Stone awoke, he had shrunk. His ginger pelt and bushy tail had been replaced by his normal tabby pelt and slim tail. He was no longer Stone. He was Stonepaw and he was in StarClan.

"Hello?" Stonepaw called.

A white she-cat padded forward. Only it wasn't Stonecloud. "Icestar!" Stonepaw gasped, running to his mentor.

"Stonepaw! Stonecloud told me everything that happened! She told you not to trust Moonstar!"

"I know! I know!" Stonepaw said. "Is Lily alright? Is Arrow alive?"

"No, Arrow is dead," Icestar said.

Stonepaw sighed. His friend had been killed protecting him. "Lily has given birth to four beautiful kits though."

"Can I see?" Stonepaw asked.

Icestar nodded. Stonepaw followed her to the pool that Stonecloud had once shown him. Stonepaw looked in the pool to see Lily. She seemed happy, not yet hearing the news of her mate's death. Four kits pounced by her.

"The one with the darkest red pelt is Hazelnut. Your son," Icestar said.

Stonepaw looked at Hazelnut as he bounced around. "The one with the normal red pelt is Heat. Your other son," she said.

"The one that looks the most like you is Bumblebee. Another son," she smiled.

Bumblebee did look like Stone a lot. Only one more fox was

left.

"The one with the lightest pelt is Honey. Your only daughter," Icestar said.

"They're beautiful," Stonepaw said. "It's a shame I didn't get to see them." Stonepaw looked closely, seeing Daisy had not given birth yet.

"Daisy will give birth very soon," Icestar said.

Stonepaw sighed. "I wonder how Lily will react to the news."

"I know it's a shame, Stonepaw, but you were never meant to be a fox," Icestar said.

"I tried to visit you when you were sick," Stonepaw told Icestar.

"Oh, really? I was so sick, that I really didn't see my surroundings. Thank you," Icestar said. "Stonepaw, I haven't been too honest with you."

"What do you mean?" Stonepaw asked.

"Well, I know your parents. Your father is my son," Icestar said.

"WHAT?! YOU KNEW ALL ALONG AND YOU NEVER TOLD ME?! YOU TOLD ME YOU DIDN'T HAVE ANY KITS!" Stonepaw hissed.

"Calm down," Icestar said. "You weren't ready to hear the story yet. You were much too young. You have gained much wisdom now. It is time you heard my story. Look into the pool."

Stonepaw looked down into the pool. He saw Stonecloud with two newborn kits. "I'll call this one Blossomkit," Stonecloud said, pointing to the fluffy she-cat. She pointed to the short-haired she-cat. "This will be Icekit, in memory of IceClan."

The scene shifted to see Stonecloud talking to a kittypet. "They're my kits too!" the kittypet yowled.

"That's my father," Icestar said. "I'm half kittypet."

Stonepaw was shocked. The greatest leader ever was a kittypet?!

The scene shifted again to see Stonecloud leaving Blossomkit at the kittypet's paws. "I can't be mates with you anymore," Stonecloud said.

The kittypet looked at her. "Why not?"

"You made me give away my joy and happiness!" Stonecloud hissed.

The scene shifted again, now showing young Icepaw playing along with another apprentice. "We'll be best friends forever," Icepaws aid to the younger apprentice. Stonecloud sat in the corner, looking down.

"Stonecloud never recovered after Blossom was given away. That apprentice I'm talking to is Lilypaw. She was my best friend," Icestar said.

The scene shifted again. "Lilypaw's coughing again!" Icepaw yowled to the medicine cat. The medicine cat looked at Lilypaw.

"I better keep her in the medicine cat den for a little while," the medicine cat said, taking Lilypaw away.

"Don't worry. She'll get better soon," said a black tom.

"You think so?" Icepaw asked.

"I know she will. She's strong," the tom said.

Once again, the scene shifted, showing a white she-cat yowling. "MY KIT IS DEAD! LILYPAW IS DEAD!"

"You said she would recover!" Icepaw hissed at the tom.

"Why did you lie, Coalpaw?!"

"I'm sorry," Coalpaw said.

Icepaw ran out into the woods onto the Thunderpath. "Why is my life so horrible?!" she screeched.

Stonepaw gasped as a monster came rolling down the Thunderpath. "Look out!" Stonecloud yowled, pushing Icepaw aside.

"Mommy!" Icepaw gasped.

"I'm sorry I was such a bad mother," Stonecloud gasped through pain. Stonecloud died, leaving Icepaw to mourn.

Icepaw tried to pick her mother's body up, only to fail. She ran back into the apprentice den in tears.

"I'm sorry,"Coalpaw whispered. "I love you."

"I love you too," Icepaw whispered back.

The scene shifted again, showing a large battle between clans. Cats were dying left and right. "We've got to get out of here!" Coalpaw yowled.

"But we need to get our warrior names first!" Icepaw yowled.

The two ran towards the leader. He gave them the names of Iceblossom and Coalfur. Together, the two lovers ran off into the woods.

When the scene shifted, Iceblossom was in a cave with Coalfur. "I'm expecting kits," she said. Coalfur smiled and praised her. Stonepaw glanced at Icestar to see her trying to avoid tears.

The next scene came, showing Iceblossom with three kits. "I'll call the gray and white she-cat Rosekit. The black she-cat will be Jetkit. The tom will be Pebblekit."

Stonepaw gasped. Pebblekit looked exactly like him.

Memories came flooding back to him. He remembered visiting his father in the medicine cat den after he had been injured. But why?

The scene shifted, showing Iceblossom talking to Coalfur. "I'm sorry, Coalfur, but I can't teach these kits anymore. I *have* to be a leader. It's my destiny."

"But I love you!" Coalfur said. He ran to the cliff, ready to jump.

"No, Coalfur!" Iceblossomy yowled. The tom leapt. Iceblossom ran down to the bottom in tears. The tom was dead. "NO!" she screeched.

The scene changed, showing Iceblossom walking with her kits. "Where are we going, Mommy?" Jetkit asked.

"A clan, Jetpaw," Iceblossom said. Iceblossom led the kits to a clan called ForestClan.

"Where are you going?!" Rosepaw yowled.

"Come back!" Pebblepaw pleaded.

"Good-bye my kits! I love you!" Iceblossom yowled.

Stonepaw looked up at Icestar. "You gave up everything to be leader."

Icestar nodded. "You must look at Pebblefoot's memories now," she said.

Stonepaw looked again, seeing Pebblepaw meeting Sandpaw. The two played and talked, eventually falling in love. Pebblefoot smiled, seeing a brown tabby kit that looked exactly like him.

"That's me!" Stonepaw gasped.

Icestar nodded.

"Icestar, why did my mother leave me?" Stonepaw asked.

"Words cannot describe. Only pictures. I must ask you to look in the pool one last time. It will explain everything."

Stonepaw looked to see a honey colored she-cat holding a brown tom in her paws, followed by three more kits.

"Who is that?"

"Just wait and see," Icestar said.

The she-cat coughed, as did the other kits. "There are my kits!" a brown tabby tom came in the nursery.

"They're wonderful, Birchstar. Meet your kits," the she-cat said, letting out another cough.

"We'll call the biggest tom Barkit," Birchstar said.

The scene shifted, showing the bodies of the she-cat and the three other kits being buried. The only ones who remained were Barkkit and Birchstar. "It's a good thing that I have you, Barkkit," Birchstar said.

The next scene shifted to another queen, holding a beautiful white and brown she-cat in her paws. "I'll call you Angelkit," she whispered. "You look like an angel."

"Who's Angelkit?" Stonepaw asked.

"Your mother's mother," Icestar replied.

The scene changed, showing Angelkit becoming Angelpaw and meeting Barkpaw. The two gazed into each other's eyes, smiling.

When it showed Barkpaw and Angelpaw again, they were smiling at the moon. "I wonder what it's like to be a leader's son," Angelpaw said.

"I will be leader one day," Barkpaw said.

"How?"

"By killing. I'll kill my father one day and take over the clan." The Angelpaw that looked like she was in love with Barkpaw quickly changed her expression, showing fear instead.

"I can't love you anymore!" she said, running out of the den.

The next scene showed Barkpaw becoming Barkface. He growled at Angelpaw. "Revenge!" he hissed as he glared at her.

Soon it showed Angelpaw becoming Angelpelt along with an apprentice whose new name was Goldentail. It showed Angelpelt and Goldentail falling love. Stonepaw couldn't help but smile as Angelpelt told Goldentail that she was expecting his kits.

The next scene showed Angelpelt in the nursery with her four kits. Goldentail stood by her. "The golden she-cat will be Sandkit. The little brown tabby she-cat will be Littlekit. The gray and white tom will be Goosepaw. The white she-cat will be Snowkit."

"Sandkit is your mother," Icestar said.

Stonepaw nodded, remembering his mother's golden pelt.

The next scene showed Goldentail in the woods. "Hello there, Goldentail!" Barkface hissed, clawing Goldentail. The two fought by Goldentail ended up dead, while Barkface slithered away. Angelpelt grieved when she heard the news of his death. Barkface smiled.

Shortly after, Angelpelt grieved again as Littlekit didn't awake. The kit had caught greencough and had died.

The scene shifted once more, showing Sandkit, Snowkit, and Goosekit becoming apprentices. Angelpelt stood, cheering on her kits.

The scene shifted again, showing Angelpelt talking Goosepaw into the woods. "Now I promised your mentor I would help you get this right," Angelpelt said. "So all you do is..." She paused seeing the terrified look on Goosepaw's face. Barkface stood before them, his claws unsheathed. "You will not hurt another

member of my family again!" Angelpelt hissed. Barkface leaped at Angelpelt, killing her in one motion. He ran after Goosepaw, killing him as well.

The scene changed, showing cats yowling. "I saw Barkface kill them!" One cat yowled. Birchstar sighed. "It seems I have no choice but to exile you, Barkface." Barkface growled and ran out of the camp. Sandpaw and Snowpaw stood with tears in their eyes.

The next scene showed Sandpaw and Snowpaw becoming Sandnose and Snowflower. Sandnose smiled as Snowflower told Sandnose she was expecting her mate, Treewhisker's kits. Snowflower padded into the warriors den, but found his nest empty. She ran into the woods only to find his body. Snowflower sat, grieving.

The next scene showed Snowflower and her kits. They were two brown tabby toms. "What will you call them?" Sandnose asked.

"I'll call the bigger one Bearkit and the smaller one Treekit," she smiled.

The water rippled changing the scene. Bearkit and Treekit stumbled into the woods only to be killed by Barkface.

Snowflower grieved once again, yowling. Birchstar ordered more patrols and guards.

The scene changed, showing Snowflower and Sandnose sleeping side by side in the warriors den. It was raining hard and a growl came. Snowflower and Sandnose gasped to see Barkface standing in front of them.

"Why are you doing this?!" Sandnose yowled.

"None of Angelpelt's kin can survive!" he hissed.

He leapt at Sandnose, only to hit Snowflower instead. The white she-cat sank to the ground, dying. Cats got up and led him away. "Snowflower," Sandnose whispered. The she-cat looked at her sister and then died. Sandnose screeched again.

The next scene showed Sandnose playing with Stonekit. More memories flooded back into Stonekit's head.

"HE'S BACK! HE'S BACK IN THE FOREST!" Stonepaw understood who they meant now.

The next scene showed Sandnose talking to him. "I'll take him to SnowClan tonight," Pebblefoot said.

"No," Sandnose replied. "You're too injured. I'll take him."

The scene shifted, showing Stonekit riding on Sandnose's back. Sandnose arrived in SnowClan, dropping Stonekit gently at Icestar's paws. "Please take care of him, Icestar."

"I will," Icestar replied.

The next scene showed Sandnose running away until she came face to face with Barkface. The two fought valiantly, but Sandnose became weak, and Barkface killed her.

The water turned back to normal. "So, this is who I am."

Icestar nodded.

"Is Barkface still alive?"

Icestar shook her head. "He died of old age."

"Good," Stonepaw said. "My father?"

"He's an elder."

"Will I be able to see my family?" Stonepaw asked.

"When the time comes."

Stonepaw had trouble taking in everything he had just learned. There was so much.

Chapter 20

Shocked. Guilty. There were too many emotions to count. Icestar had let him to think alone. Stonepaw now still sat by the pool. His mother had only been trying to protect him, and the anger he had first felt had now become guilt. His mother had *died* for him.

There was too much to take in. The fact Icestar did have a mate and kits also shocked him. Those horrible memories she had gone through would not only continue scarring Icestar, but they would scar Stonepaw too.

There was no time to think about Lily and the kits. Stonepaw just thought about what he had just seen. He wanted to make sure Barkface was gone forever, so he couldn't get Stonepaw. He wanted to go to ForestClan and see his father. He wanted to find all of his family members here in StarClan.

"Wait!" Stonepaw said, realizing something. He ran towards the direction that Icestar had gone. "Icestar!" he yowled.

Another she-cat padded forward though. "Stonecloud!" Stonepaw gasped, running towards the she-cat.

"Stonepaw! Did Icestar show you everything?"

"Yes! Yes," Stonepaw said. "I have more questions though."

"It is best you ask Icestar these questions, not me," Stonecloud said.

"Where is Icestar?"

"She's in that large den over there. Her mate, Coalfur, is with her. I'm not sure if she wants to be interrupted," Stonecloud said.

"Is your mate here, Stonecloud?" Stonepaw asked.

"He is in a different part of StarClan. A part where kittypets roam free. I have already apologized to him, so there is no more to say. I haven't seen him since I first arrived here."

"Oh," Stonepaw said. "I'll go talk to Icestar now."

Stonepaw padded towards the den. "Um, Icestar?"

"Stonepaw. Come in," a mewl came from the den.

Stonepaw padded inside to see Icestar sitting next to the familiar black tom. "You remember Coalfur from the visions, correct?"

Stonepaw nodded. "Nice to meet you, Coalfur."

"And you," Coalfur said, dipping his head.

"What is it?" Icestar asked.

"Tree climbing. Is that why I'm so good at tree climbing? Because I'm ForestClan?" Stonepaw asked.

Icestar nodded. "You have wonderful tree climbing talents. Your mother would be proud of you."

"Why can't I see her or the rest of the family?" Stonepaw asked.

"I can't tell you," Icestar said. "It is the powers of StarClan who will."

"When can I?"

"When the time is right," Icestar said.

"How will I know?" Stonepaw asked.

"You'll know," Icestar replied.

"I have one more question," Stonepaw said. "What is Ivypaw up to?"

Icestar sighed. "I regretted showing you this. If you wish to see Cottonpaw and Ivypaw, then I guess we should head back to the pool."

"Can we?"

Icestar nodded. "I'll be right back, Coalfur," Icestar said, licking her mate's cheek. Stonepaw sighed. He was beginning to miss not only Ivypaw, but Lily too.

The two padded back towards the same pool. "Look," Icestar said. The scene showed the camp, now run by Smokestar. Cottonpaw sat next to a pure white she-cat.

"Who is that?" Stonepaw asked.

"That is Snowpaw. She's a newly apprentice. She's a *very* good apprentice as are her sisters. She's a nasty, mean cat though. She acts the sweetest towards Cottonpaw."

"Cottonpaw deserves someone better than her," Stonepaw growled.

"Oh, no," Icestar said. "She's actually very sweet towards him. They are a great couple, but she harasses her sisters and Mousekit and Dawnkit."

"Who are all these cats?"

"So, after Smokepaw became a warrior, I made him deputy. Well, apparently he went to go tell Wavestorm that he didn't want to be mates with her. She got all mad because she was expecting his

kits. Snowpaw, Waterpaw, and Featherpaw are her three daughters. Well, Lilywhisker, Smokestar's current mate, became pregnant shortly after their birth and gave birth to two daughters, Mousekit and Dawnkit."

Stonepaw looked, seeing the two she-cats. One looked exactly like Smokestar while the other had a gray tabby pelt.

"Snowpaw and Featherpaw, not really Waterpaw, became jealous that Dawnkit and Mousekit got the most attention from their father, so Snowpaw and Featherpaw constantly harass Dawnkit and Mousekit. They like to harass Waterpaw too because she's the only nice one," Icestar said.

"What do Waterpaw and Featherpaw look like?" Stonepaw asked.

The water shifted, showing a silver-blue she-cat and a siamese cat. "The blue one is Waterpaw. The other one is Featherpaw," Icestar said.

"What about Ivypaw?" Stonepaw asked.

Icestar sighed, showing the gray and white she-cat playing with a gray cat. "That is Ashpaw."

"Who is he?" Stonepaw growled.

"So you know how Skycloud and Blacktail became mates, right?" Icestar asked.

Stonepaw nodded.

"Well Skycloud was expecting Blacktail's kits when he died. She gave birth to Ashpaw and Cinderpaw. Ashpaw is the gray cat. Cinderpaw is a gray tabby she-cat. She seems to spend most of her time with a tortoiseshell tom named Yarrowpaw. No doubt they'll be mates," Icestar said.

"So Ivypaw loves Ashpaw now?" Stonepaw asked.

Icestar nodded. "Yes. Don't feel too bad, Stonepaw. She still remembers you."

"Remembering isn't enough," Stonepaw growled.

"I'm sorry, Stonepaw." Icestar padded away, leaving the tom to mourn.

Stonepaw sat, growling. At least Lily hadn't moved on. Or had she? He would have to find out. But how?

Chapter 21

Stonepaw couldn't sleep all night. He kept thinking about Ivypaw and Lily. Lily and Ivypaw. The cats were soon awaking when Stonepaw finally realized something. How could he leave Lily alone like that?! He had to be a fox again?! It was the only way he could be happy again!

Stonepaw hoped that Stonecloud and Icestar were still asleep. Carefully, he slipped out of his den. No sound came from Icestar's den. No sound came from Stonecloud's either.

"Good-bye," he whispered. "I'll be back soon."

Light on his feet, he padded away into the forest until it turned dark and he knew he was in the Dark Forest.

"Hello?" he called. "Moonstar?"

He sat for awhile, hearing no sound. Finally, the silver-blue she-cat appeared. "Stonepaw, long time no see? I see you're probably here to get revenge on me."

"Actually, I'm not here to do that at all," Stonepaw said.

Moonstar grinned. "Why are you here, then? To see Barkface?"

Stonepaw shook his head. "I want to be a fox again."

Moonstar laughed. "That's a funny joke, Stonepaw. But there's no way I'm falling--," she stopped, looking at his face. "You're serious? You want to be a fox again?"

Stonepaw nodded. "Whatever it takes."

"Well, I suppose we could work something out. But you'll have to pay a different price this time," Moonstar said.

"What?" Stonepaw asked.

"I can make you a fox again, but once you die this time, you'll go to fox heaven. You'll never be Stonepaw again, and you can never return to StarClan," Moonstar said.

"I don't know," Stonepaw said, having second thoughts about the idea.

"But there's happiness there. You'll always be happy as a fox," Moonstar said.

"But I'll never see Icestar again or...Ivypaw," he said.

Moonstar laughed. "Icestar doesn't care about you. She just

cares about her mate now. And Ivypaw. Ivypaw has totally forgotten about you! She's so in love with that Ashpaw," Moonstar grinned.

"She doesn't care about me anymore?" Stonepaw whined.

"Of course she doesn't. Lily does though. She has kits without a father. She's all alone, grieving. I'm giving you one more chance, Stonepaw. Will you take it or not?" Moonstar asked.

"I-I'll do it," Stonepaw said.

Moonstar laughed. "Great."

He followed her near the black swamp again. It hadn't changed since the last time he had been there.

"I'm sure you know what to do," Moonstar said.

"Jump in and be motionless," Stonepaw said.

"Good," Moonstar grinned. Something wasn't right.

"I'm ready," Stonepaw said.

"GO!" Moonstar hissed.

Frightened, Stonepaw jumped into the black swamp again. This time it was more painful. He felt it swallowing him and he couldn't breathe. He couldn't gasp for air though. He let it suffocate him, almost killing him. Sotnepaw shut his eyes, trying to feel less pain. More pain came though. Stonepaw would start to squirm any minute. Finally, light shone and he felt better.

When Stonepaw opened his eyes, he sat in the hunting grounds again. His ginger fur and tail were back. "I'M BACK! I'M A FOX AGAIN! WOO HOO!" he cheered.

He suddenly remembered the reason he had come. "LILY!" he yowled. "LILY, I'M BACK!"

He rushed through the bushes to see Lily in tears. "Stone? Stone, is that you?!"

"I'M HERE, LILY!" he yowled. The two ran towards each other, meeting once again. Lily sobbed into his fur.

"I thought you were dead," she whispered.

"I'm not," Stone said. "Where are the kits?"

"That's why I'm sad," Lily grieved. "Heat, Hazelnut, and Bumblebee touched the moss. Heat is...dead. He was buried a few days ago. Hazelnut survived. Bumblebee has just died. Thankfully, I know a way to bring him back."

"Heat and Bumblebee?" Stone asked.

Lily shook her head. "It's too late for Heat. I can still bring Bumblebee back though."

"How?"

"I kill myself," Lily gulped.

"No!" Stone gasped. "I traveled all this way to come back to you."

"I've lived my life," Lily said. "Bumblebee hasn't. You're here, Stone. You have to take care of them until they're adults. Promise me you will."

"I-I promise," Stone said. "There's no way to change your mind?"

"No way," Lily said. "Mother, prepare the spell!"

Stone sat, watching Lily and Chase make an odd meal out of herbs and plants. "Stone, go get Bumblebee."

Stone padded into the den to see a lifeless fox kit lying on the moss. He sighed, picking up the dead kit. He brought Bumblebee out near Lily and Chase.

"It's done," Chase said.

"So this is it?" Stone said.

"I'm afraid so," Lily said. "Please take good care of them. I love you."

"I love you too," Stone said. "I'll never forget you Lily."

"I won't either," Lily said. They exchanged looks one more time. Lily said good-bye to her parents and Daisy whose kits had just been born a few days previous.

Lily bit into the food, looking at Stone one last time. Her eyes rolled to the back of her head and she collapsed on the ground. Shutting her eyes, she died.

"NO!" Stone screeched. He ran towards her, sobbing into her ginger fur. "Lily, I love you," he sobbed.

"Mommy?"

Stone turned around to see Bumblebee stirring. "Mommy, is that you?"

"Bumblebee! You're alive!"

"Who are you?" Bumblebee gasped. "You look just like me."

"I'm your father, Stone."

Forgive my 2012 writing where I thought a good story meant killing off every other character.

Chapter 22

"B-but you're dead," Bumblebee gasped.

"I'm not," Stone said. "You were dead too, Bumblebee. Mommy risked her life to save you."

"Mommy's dead?" Bumblebee whimpered.

Stone nodded. "I'm here to take care of you kits now. Come out."

He gasped as he saw his other two beautiful kits come out. Hazelnut padded forward as Honey padded behind.

"You must be Hazelnut," he said, pointing to the dark ginger kit.

"How'd you know?" Hazelnut gasped.

Stone laughed. "I just do."

He looked at his daughter who looked so much like Lily. "And you must be Honey," he said.

Honey laughed. "Yes, I'm Honey. Did you see Daisy's kits?! They're beautiful!"

"Come here," Stone said, calling his kits forward. The kits ran to their father and let the tears out.

"I can't believe Mommy's gone," Hazelnut whispered.

"I know. Me too," Stone said. "It's alright kits. I'm here to take care of you now."

Honey sniffled and nudged Stone's pelt. "You look so much like your mother," Stone said to Honey.

"Everyone says that," Honey replied.

"Why don't you kits go get some sleep?" Stone suggested. "You've had a very tough day."

The fox kits padded into their burrow to sleep. Stone padded into Daisy's burrow to see her kits. She was also blessed with four kits.

"How are you?" Stone asked.

"It's good to see you again, Stone. I'm well," Daisy replied.

"I'm sorry about Arrow," Stone said.

"I'm sorry about Lily," Daisy replied.

Stone laughed. "I guess we've both lost someone close to us. Arrow risked his life for me, you know."

"I'm glad he did. Arrow was always so kind."

"He would be very proud of his kits," Stone said. "What are their names?"

Daisy smiled. "Well three of them are female and one is male." She pointed to the largest fox kit. "This is Sunshine. She was the first born and the biggest."

"Sunshine. That's a pretty name," Stone said.

"I named her in memory of Heat."

Stone nodded. Daisy pointed to the next kit. It was a medium sized male kit. "This is...Arrow."

Stone smiled, holding back tears as well. "He looks just like his father."

"I know," Daisy smiled. She pointed to a female kit who was about the same size as Arrow. "This is Pebble. I named her in memory of you actually. But now you're here, so it's a useless name

now."

"It's still a pretty name," Stone said. "She may not know why she was given that name, but at least she'll use it."

Daisy nodded. She pointed to the smallest kit. "This is Meadow. She isn't named after anything. Just Meadow. She's the smallest, but certainly the most beautiful."

Stone nodded. "Well, soon they'll be ready to play with my kits."

Daisy laughed. "Yes. Maybe they can meet tomorrow."

Stone nodded, padding out of the den. "Good-bye," he called. He left the red fox to watch over her newborn kits.

Chapter 23

About a week had passed since Stone's return as a fox. He was not taking Lily's death well. None of the other foxes were. But Stone's kits reminded him of Lily gave up her life and soon he began to not feel as sad as he used to be.

Daisy's kits had met Stone's kits. They all played together, but he really enjoyed seeing Hazelnut and Sunshine play together. No doubt the two would be mates. It made Stone smile. It had reminded him of long ago when Stone and Lily were in love, as were Daisy and Arrow, and they had all hung out with each other.

"Daddy," Stone felt a tug on his ear. He opened his eyes to see Hazelnut.

"Someone's up early," Stone groaned.

"Can I go and play with Sunshine?" Hazelnut asked.

"It's really early," Stone said.

"Please?" Hazelnut begged.

"If she's up. If she isn't, you must come right back here. No dilly-dalling in the forest," Stone said.

"Alright," Hazelnut groaned, running out of the den.

Their conversation had woke up the other fox kits. Bumblebee let out a huge yawn while Honey opened her eyes and gazed around. "Good morning," Stone said.

"Morning, Daddy," Bumblebee said.

"Can we go outside?" Honey asked.

Stone groaned. He couldn't really tell them 'no' since Hazelnut had gone outside. "Alright," he said. "I guess you kits won't

let me sleep."

Stone padded out of the den. Daisy's kits were already up. Chase sat near, watching the seven kits play around.

"Daisy is sleeping?" Stone asked.

Chase nodded. "I can watch them, Stone. You can get some sleep."

Stone shook his head. "They already woke me up. I'll just stay up now."

He sat down next to Chase and they watched the kits play together. "Lily would be proud, you know," Chase said. "For being such a responsible father."

"Thanks," Stone said. "I miss her a bunch."

"Why wouldn't you?" Chase asked. "I miss her too. Despite all the kits, it feels so empty around here without her."

Stone nodded. "Yes, I know. The kits are a blessing though. Honey reminds me of Lily."

"Well she looks a lot like her too," Chase said. "Bumblebee looks the most like you."

"I know," Stone replied.

"It's a shame that you didn't get to know Heat. Well maybe it isn't too bad. He and Hazelnut were the troublemakers," Chase laughed. Her laughs came to sighs. "I guess troublemakers aren't so good. That's how Heat ended up dying. They went into the woods without permission and touched the poisonous moss."

"So I guess Hazelnut is immune?" Stone asked.

"It's a weird thing, really," Chase said. "Most foxes aren't immune to the poisonous features of that moss. Hazelnut is lucky."

Chase and Stone continued to watch the kits play. After

awhile, Daisy padded out of the burrow and her kits ran to her. "Mommy!" they screeched.

Daisy laughed. "Let's play!" She rolled around with her kits, filling them with laughter and giggles. Sunshine padded off to talk to Hazelnut.

Stone's eyes directed towards them. He smiled at how Hazelnut would become nervous around her. Just as Stone had been when he talked to Lily.

His eyes diverted them, so that he could give his son privacy. He continued to watch Honey talking to Arrow. He looked to see Bumblebee playing with Meadow and Pebble.

Stone looked at Chase. "I'm going to hunt. I'll be back soon."

"Good-bye," Chase called.

Stone padded into the woods, looking around for the moss. He had seen it earlier, but he wanted to be safe. Glancing around, he knew the coast was clear. He dived for a squirrel and caught it in his mouth.

Stone sat in the woods, eating his squirrel. How delicious it tasted. He sat, remembering when he had fallen from the tree while catching the bird. He let out a small laugh. Those days were gone.

A thought hit him. *Why am I here?* he thought. *Lily is gone. Arrow is gone too. Now everyone just sighs and groans, never to experience happiness again.* He shook his head, alleviating the thoughts. No, he was here to raise *his* kits. He had promised Lily that he would.

Stone finished the squirrel and padded back to the burrow. All of the kits had vanished. All he heard was Daisy's wails. What was she crying about? Was one of his kits injured? He gasped, bursting into camp.

"What happened?!" he gasped.

He looked to see Hazelnut, Honey, and Bumblebee all safe,

sitting next to Chase's burrow.

"Daisy?" he asked.

She turned around. "Sunshine is dying."

"How?" Stone gasped.

"The moss," she whispered.

Hazelnut looked down. He was obviously trying not to cry. Stone looked up. "How did it happen?" he asked.

"Hazelnut and Sunshine snuck into the woods. They were playing when she fell on it," Daisy whimpered.

Stone turned to Hazelnut. "What did I say about going into the woods?!" he growled.

"We didn't go far," Hazelnut whimpered.

"You know it's dangerous to go out in the woods by yourself. You could've been killed by a hunter, eaten, or...touch the moss! You have to stay in my sight at all times now! You've put Sunshine in danger. Do you want everyone else to die the same way because *you* led into the woods?" he growled.

Hazelnut looked hurt. "NO!" he screeched and ran into the burrow.

"Wait, Hazelnut. I didn't mean--" he sighed.

Daisy sighed as well. "Sunshine should've known better. Don't hold him up to her death. She will die, but she's still alive for now," Daisy said. Stone glanced in the burrow, looking at the ill fox kit.

Stone padded into the burrow. He could hear Hazelnut's wails before he even entered the burrow. "Hazelnut," he said.

"Go away!" Hazelnut growled.

"I'm sorry, Hazelnut," Stone said.

"Sure," Hazelnut growled. "I suppose it's my fault for Lily's death too. And Arrow's. And Heat's."

"I'm sorry," Stone said. "It isn't your fault. But you just have to listen to me. There is dangerous stuff in the woods. You can't go in there without an adult fox by your side. Do you understand?"

"I understand," Hazelnut said. "We really didn't go far. We were racing and then playing. I came right back as soon as she touched it."

"I believe you," Stone said. "Please don't go in the woods next time. Now go, stay with Sunshine until she dies."

"Okay. Thanks, Daddy," he said. He ran out of the burrow towards Sunshine.

For most of the night, they were up. Sunshine didn't die until the dead of night. Hazelnut and Daisy sobbed through most of the night. Stone sat with his son all night, comforting him. When sleep did come, the sun was just beginning to rise. Why did he come back here?

Chapter 24

Another week or so had passed. Things were sort of getting better. The sun's rays of green-leaf were hot, baking the burrow and filling it with heat.

It was obvious that Daisy wasn't over Sunshine's death. She constantly made sure that her kits were with her at *all* times. Just the slightest wandering away would result in consequences.

Hazelnut hadn't been doing too well, but Meadow had comforted him. The two grew close to each other, and Meadow quickly replaced Sunshine.

Stone still thought of why he had chosen to return. He felt ashamed, but he was beginning to regret becoming a fox again now. The only thing that had happened was death. It was a much different environment than when he had first arrived.

"Why did you leave me, Lily?" he would whisper at night when the kits were asleep. It was too unbearable. He began to think of his past. Did Ivypaw have a mate and kits by now? How about Cottonpaw? There was no way of telling, but Stone knew they most likely had a better life than him.

Stone sat near the den, watching his kits play. How did they overcome such sadness so fast? They were young. They still had a life ahead of them to make things better. Maybe that's why they were able to get over it.

Some nights, Stone felt like slitting his throat, just to escape the horrors. Then he would remember his promise to Lily, and he would stop.

"Hi, Hazelnut," Meadow said, brushing her tail against his pelt.

Hazelnut smiled. "Hi, Meadow. Wanna play?"

Meadow nodded and the two went into full on play-mode. What once made Stone smile, made him sigh. What he would give to be back in the old days with Lily, Daisy, and Arrow. There was so much more he would give just to be back in SnowClan, forgetting all of this.

The clouds became gray overhead. The first storm of the summer. There was much more to come. Stone would bring the kits inside when it began to rain. Stone soon felt the first drop on his muzzle.

"Inside!" he yowled. "It's raining!"

His kits looked at him like he was crazy. "It's barely raining," Honey complained.

"The first drop goes into a drizzle, then into a steady downpour, then into a full pour, then into *hailing, then into a thunder storm!"* he growled. "Inside, now!"

His kits stared hopelessly at each other and then padded into the burrow. There was no point of playing in the burrow, so the kits stood, looking at each other.

"Just sleep," Stone said. "You kits don't get enough of it."

Stone waited until the kits were asleep before he closed his eyes, falling asleep as well. The crash of thunder awoke him. It was much darker now. It was probably nighttime. Stone groaned, tossing and turning, trying to get some sleep. He suddenly sniffed a familiar smell. A really familiar smell. Was it true? No, how could they have found him?

But it was. He heard boots crashing against the mud. The hunters had found the foxes' territory! Stone gasped. *Maybe they won't come here* he thought. *Maybe they'll just move on.*

That's when he heard the first yowl, followed by many others. His kits soon awoke, and he heard the first nearby scream. Chase stood up against her den, frightened. Rock stood too.

"What's going on?" Honey whispered.

"Hunters," Stone gasped. "We have to get out of here.

Foxes began to evacuate their burrows. Stone couldn't look at the arrow pierced into Rock's side and Chase ran off into the woods.

Another scream came. This time Daisy had been shot. Her kits screamed in terror. Their screams came short as Pebble was pierced as well, falling dead immediately. Rock was dead well. Daisy sat, dying.

"Daisy!" Stone gasped, running over towards her. He gasped as an arrow pierced his foot, just like it had done so long ago.

"DADDY!" Hazelnut screeched as an arrow went through him, killing him immediately.

"Hazelnut!" Meadow screeched.

"WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?!" Stone growled. "WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS TO US, MOONSTAR?!"

Suddenly it became quiet. Too quiet. He gasped as he glanced around. Frozen. That's what the world was. Everything was frozen in time. He saw a hunter, pointing his arrow at Meadow. He saw Daisy, her eyes still open, while a pool of blood sat beside her. He saw Rock's shape on the ground.

"Hello?" Stone called. No one moved. Everything was still.

He gasped as a white she-cat floated down from the sky, leaving a silver trail behind her. It was Icestar!

"Icestar!" Stone gasped. "You found out! You came looking for me!"

Icestar smiled. She looked small compared to Stone's large body frame. Stone smiled as he shrunk down, becoming Stonepaw once again.

"I can't do this anymore," Stonepaw confessed. "I was wrong! Becoming a fox again was a nightmare!"

Icestar smiled. "You're lucky I found out in time. Or else you might have already been in fox heaven, out of my reach."

"What now?" Stonepaw asked.

"Well do you want to continue being a fox?"

Stonepaw shook his head. "No. I don't want to see them die. I don't want to see anyone die anymore."

"That's what I thought," Icestar said. "To StarClan we will go."

Stonepaw gazed at the injured foxes one last time, and then he was gone.

Chapter 25

Stonepaw sat in StarClan. He was away from the horrors. There were no more horrors. Everything was peaceful and quiet.

"What happens to the foxes?" Stonepaw asked.

"You have two options," Icestar said. "Either you can keep it the way it was or I erase you from their minds forever. It will be like you never existed. Lily will have another mate. Arrow will die at another time. Your kits won't exist."

Stonepaw sighed. "I think the second one will be better for everyone. It's probably best that Stone never existed."

Icestar smiled. "Yes. By all powers of StarClan, I change Stone's fate!" she yowled.

A flash of light burned Stonepaw's eyes, then he saw clearly again. "Would you like to see what's happening now?" Icestar asked.

Stonepaw nodded, padding over to the pool with her. He looked in seeing the foxes. Chase and Rock laughed happily. Daisy and Arrow stood next to each other with the same four kits.

"Most of them have different names, except Meadow. Meadow is the same. The male is River. Sunshine is now Dandelion. Pebble is now Squirrel."

Stonepaw nodded, seeing the same four kits, all with different personalities. Stonepaw gasped, seeing another unfamiliar fox standing next to Lily. Lily's stomach was plump with kits. Finally, Stonepaw let the tears come.

"I know," Icestar said. "It's hard. But you're protecting everyone now. Your choice has kept everyone you love alive."

Stonepaw nodded, not speaking. "What about Ivypaw?"

"Ivy*gaze*," Icestar corrected him. "She and Ash*claw* became mates. Ivygaze just gave birth to three healthy kits."

"I knew she forgot me," Stonepaw groaned.

"Forgot you?" Icestar asked. "Never! You didn't even get to see the kits! Come! I'll show you!"

Stonepaw looked into the pool again to see Ivygaze with three kits sleeping next to her. One was a beautiful tortoiseshell she-cat. The others were a gray tabby tom and a brown tabby tom who looked much like him.

"What are their names?" Stonepaw groaned. "I still don't see how this has to do with me."

"She had to have Cottonnose translate them to everyone. The she-cat is Softkit. The gray tabby tom is Runningkit. The brown tabby tom is...Stonekit."

Stonepaw gasped, feeling the emotions come on again. "S-Stonekit?"

Icestar smiled, nodding. "She never forgot you, Stonepaw."

"I know," Stonepaw said. "I never should've believed what Moonstar said." He glanced back in the pool seeing a familiar white she-cat. "Is that-," he was cut off by Icestar.

"Yes that's Snow*tail.* Cottonnose's mate. Their kits are almost apprentices. See the white tom with the black tail and the white she-cat?"

Stonepaw nodded. "What are their names?"

"The tom is Fuzzykit. The she-cat is Marshmallowkit," Icestar said. "There's also one more thing, Stonepaw."

"What?"

"You need to return to SnowClan?"

"Wh-what?" he gasped. Return? As in *stay?* Was Icestar speaking the truth?

"Yes. The portal *will* open to you very soon. The changing of Stone's fate has changed your destiny rapidly. When you arrive, you must convince Ashclaw that he is the wrong mate. It will take a lot of effort, but you must try," Icestar said.

"I will," Stonepaw replied. "Will I see you again, Icestar?"

"Yes," Icestar replied. "Once your life is well lived, you'll return here. I will see you again."

"Where's Stonecloud? I have to say good-bye to her!" he yowled.

"There is not enough time, but I will tell her good-bye for you," Icestar said. Just after she finished her sentence, a bright light flashed towards Stonepaw.

"Good-bye, Icestar," he said. "Thank you for all you've done."

"Good-bye, Stonepaw! I'll see you soon," she said.

Stonepaw stepped into the portal. Lights flashed around, screwing up his eyes. He landed hard on the ground. When his vision returned and focused, he realized he was in the same hunting grounds where Rock had killed him.

Chapter 26

Stonepaw's first instinct was to run to Lily, telling her how much he loved her. He shook his head. He wasn't a fox now. He was a cat. It was Ivygaze he loved. Even if he did run to Lily, she wouldn't know what he was talking about even if Chase translated for him.

Stonepaw got up and shook off his pelt that was covered in leaves. The hot season of green-leaf made his pelt sizzle in the heat. He was about to move when he heard a yowl.

"STOP! WHO ARE YOU?!" a growl came.

Stonepaw looked to see Smokestar on patrol with many other cats. Stonepaw gasped as he recognized Cottonnose. "I-I'm Stonepaw," Stonepaw stammered.

"Stonepaw? As in the one that died moons ago?" Smokestar asked.

Stonepaw nodded. "Yes, it's me."

Smokestar laughed. "Did you think you could pull tricks on the SnowClan leader? Get out of here, you rogue!"

Stonepaw shrunk down. "But I'm telling the truth."

Smokestar was about to lunge at him again, when Cottonnose stopped him. "No, Smokestar. I really think this is Stonepaw. We used to play when we were kits."

Stonepaw nodded. "Yes. Cottonnnose, Ivygaze, and I were best friends."

Smokestar groaned. "Are you sure?"

Cottonnose rolled his eyes. "Here, I'll test. Who was the first cat you saw when you arrived in SnowClan?"

"Petalnose. I was really confused and I freaked out," Stonepaw said.

"This is the real Stonepaw," Cottonnose said.

"But how is it possible?" Smokestar asked.

Stonepaw sat. "Do you want the long version or the short version?" he asked.

"Short would be nice," Smokestar replied.

"Icestar sent me back here to uncover my destiny," Stonepaw said.

"Why not when you first died?" Cottonnose asked.

"There were some, um, problems," Stonepaw replied.

"Well let's go then," Smokestar said. Stonepaw smiled as he padded back to the familiar camp.

When walking into cats, many asked who he was. Smokestar groaned and padded up to the rock.

"ALL CATS OLD ENOUGH TO CATCH THEIR OWN PREY JOIN BENEATH THE HIGHROCK FOR A CLAN MEETING!" Smokestar yowled.

Cats gathered. Smokestar motioned Stonepaw up onto the rock. "Cats, not many of you may know him, but this is Stonepaw."

Stonepaw gasped as he saw Ivygaze burst out of the nursery. When she saw Stonepaw, she almost collapsed. Tears filled her eyes. Ashclaw stared at her. "Are you okay, Ivygaze?" Ivygaze didn't reply.

"When I was an apprentice, Stonepaw died. A miracle from StarClan sent him back to us. Stonepaw will continue his training as an apprentice. Please treat him with respect."

Mews of confusion came from the cats as the gathering

broke up. Stonepaw ran to Ivygaze.

"Ivygaze, it's me!"

Ashclaw stared at Stonepaw. "You're the cat that our kit is named after? I expected you to be um older."

"Well I guess I'm still seven moons," Stonepaw said. "That's the age I was when I died."

Ivygaze smiled, nuzzling Stonepaw. Tears filled her eyes.

"Ivygaze, what are you doing?!" Ashclaw growled. Ashclaw poked his tail at Stonepaw. "What even was your relationship with her?!"

"We were um friends," Stonepaw said.

Ivygaze looked at Ashclaw, pointing her tail to the nursery. "Fine, I'll go watch the kits," he growled.

"Ivygaze, you have no idea what I went through to get here," Stonepaw said. "I'm glad I'm back here with you."

Ivygaze sighed, shaking her head.

"I know. Things can't go back the way they were because of...Ashclaw," Stonepaw said. "But StarClan is going to make me tell him that he is not the right cat for you."

Ivygaze sighed. She let out a warm smile, but it quickly faded away. "I know you still love him," Stonepaw said. "Look, I won't even bring it up until I become a warrior."

Ivygaze smiled and licked his cheek.

Stonepaw smiled. "Well, I better go ask Smokestar who my mentor will be. Bye, Ivygaze. I'll come see your kits later," he said, padding away to Smokestar.

"Smokestar," he called.

"Stonepaw, come in. What can I help you with?" he asked.

"I was wondering who my mentor would be, actually."

"I've decided to give you Cottonnose since you don't know all the cats here now. Will that do?" Smokestar asked.

"Yes!" Stonepaw said. "Thank you!"

He ran around the camp. He had never been happier. Except maybe with Lily... He ran to Cottonnose. "You're my mentor!"

Cottonnose smiled and laughed. "This is weird. Normally I thought *you* would be teaching me warrior moves."

Stonepaw laughed. "I know. It's weird. I'm heading off to the nursery to see Ivygaze's kits. Want to come?"

"I have to go on patrol. Maybe later though. Bye," Cottonnose said, padding off.

Stonepaw sighed. This was the exact reason he had commited suicide in the first place. He padded off to the nursery to see Ivygaze's kits playing around.

Ivygaze pointed her tail towards Stonepaw.

"Who's that, Momma?" Runningkit asked.

"I'm your mother's friend," Stonepaw replied. "Stonekit is named after me."

"You're Stonepaw?" Softkit gasped. Her tortoiseshell pelt stood out around her brothers'.

Stonepaw nodded.

"We thought you were gone," Runningkit said.

"I'm right here," Stonepaw replied. "Where is Stonekit?"

The little brown tabby kit turned around. "Hi," he mewed.

"He's a shy one," Softkit said.

"Hi, Stonekit. How are you?"

"I'm good," he replied softly. "Do you live here now?"

Stonepaw nodded. "Yes I do. It's good to meet all of you. I better get some rest now. I'll see you all later!"

The kits waved good-bye and Stonepaw padded into the apprentice den. It was weird that he was in the same den as Cottonnose's kits, but he shrugged and fell asleep.

Chapter 27

Stonepaw awoke and padded out of the apprentice den, yawning. It reminded him of when Icestar was mentoring him.

"Good morning, Stonepaw," Cottonnnose said.

"Hey, Cottonnose," Stonepaw replied. "What will we be learning today?"

"We will be seeing the territories," Cottonnose replied.

"Cottonnose, I've seen them before. I was an apprentice before, remember?"

"There have been changes," Cottonnose said.

"What changes? FoxClan and CloudClan live here," Stonepaw said.

Cottonnose shook his head. "CloudClan left the forest. NightClan and BirdClan live here now."

"NightClan? BirdClan?"

"Follow me," Cottonnose said.

He led Stonepaw into the woods, showing him the familiar territory. He then padded to the FoxClan border.

"This is FoxClan," Stonepaw said.

Cottonnose nodded. They padded until they came to Snake Falls, the waterfall that led through SnowClan territory.

"What's that weird smell?" Stonepaw asked.

"That's the NightClan scent. Their territory is on these hills. The top of the mountain is still empty. BirdClan lives near the Great

Oak and Moonstone. They are a small clan, but they'll grow."

"I see," Stonepaw said.

He gasped as he saw cats walking on patrol. A white tom led the patrol, followed by four apprentices and their mentors.

"SnowClan cats! What are you doing near our border?!" the white tom hissed.

"Relax, Cloudstar. I'm just showing my apprentice the territory," he said.

"That better be all!" a silver tabby she-cat hissed.

Cloudstar held the she-cat back. "It's alright, Silverstripe. They are doing no harm."

Cottonnose and Stonepaw padded away.

"Who put brambles in his nest?" Stonepaw growled.

Cottonnose shrugged. "NightClan is not a friendly clan. It's best you know that."

"Who's BirdClan's leader?" Stonepaw asked.

"Bumblestar. He's very kind, actually."

"Is Sunstar still the leader of FoxClan?" Stonepaw asked.

Cottonnose nodded. "You should probably go gather moss for the elders."

Stonepaw groaned. "I forgot about that," he said.

Cottonnose and Stonepaw padded farther into the forest to gather moss. Stonepaw dug some up, squeezing it to get rid of the water. He stomped on the moss until it was dry enough.

"Good routine," Cottonnose said.

"Icestar taught me it," Stonepaw replied.

With the moss in his mouth, Stonepaw padded back to the camp, giving the moss to the elders.

"What nice moss!" An elder, Swiftstorm, exclaimed.

"Stonepaw is very good at collecting moss," Darkwhisper mewed.

Soon, night fell. Stonepaw had been busy playing with Ivygaze's kits all day, so he was very tiresome.

Stonepaw padded in the apprentice den.

"Hello, Stonepaw," Marshmallowpaw smiled.

"Hey," Stonepaw replied.

"What did you do today?" Fuzzypaw asked.

"Look, I'm really tired," Stonepaw replied. "If I could just get some sleep..."

"Oh, sorry," Fuzzypaw growled, padding back to his nest.

Stonepaw closed his eyes and slept.

A large noise woke up Stonepaw. The sun had not even risen yet. He thought he could hear the faint mews of cats yowling. Stonepaw's ears pricked.

He quietly padded out of his den, still hearing the yowls and large noises. How were the other cats sleeping through this? Stonepaw padded into the nursery. "Ivygaze," he whispered.

The gray and white she-cat opened her eyes. She tilted her head.

"Do you hear that?" Stonepaw whispered.

Ivygaze pricked her ears, but eventually nodded.

"We need to go investigate," Stonepaw said.

Ivygaze looked around for a second. She looked at Stonepaw, shaking her head.

"Those could be our clanmates out there," he hissed.

"Hello?" Wavestorm murmured, awoken by Stonepaw. Stonepaw remained quiet until the she-cat lowed her head again.

Ivygaze sighed. She got up quietly, making her kits cozy in the moss. She quietly padded out of the den.

Stonepaw and Ivygaze padded into the woods. The sounds and yowls got louder.

"Hello?" Stonepaw called out in the woods. No answer came.

They continued looking around. The farther west they walked, the louder the sound came. Soon, the sound got louder, piercing Stonepaw's ears.

"It's coming from FoxClan!" he gasped.

Ivygaze nodded, following him to the border. He gasped as he saw twoleg machines, tearing trees down, digging holes. Where were the cats?

Ivygaze looked at Stonepaw, shaking her head. She pointed her tail back to SnowClan camp.

"Relax," Stonepaw said. "I just want to get a little closer."

He stepped over the border line, walking farther in, but still far away from the destruction.

He gasped as he saw cats running frantically around. The twolegs didn't bother to notice. They continued digging holes, dropping a substance over the ground, and chopping trees down. He gasped as he noticed a pregnant tortoiseshell she-cat running alongside a black tom.

"LOOK OUT!" the tom yowled, knocking the she-cat out of

the way. The tree landed on top of him, killing him on the spot.

"NIGHTCLAW!" the she-cat screeched.

Ivygaze turned to Stonepaw, pointing her tail to SnowClan again.

"We have to help them!"

Ivygaze shook her head, not letting him move forward.

"I guess it's too late," Stonepaw sighed, still hearing the screeches of cats. He saw Sunstar's unmoving body lying on the ground.

"We can go back now," Stonepaw said. "But we have to tell Smokestar."

Ivygaze nodded. They padded back in the woods, trying not to look back at the ugly scene.

Stonepaw then realized how tired he was. They would have to tell Smokestar in the morning. They couldn't disrupt the whole clan.

They made it back to camp safe and sound. Stonepaw padded back in his nest to sleep. He was unable to close his eyes though. He kept thinking of the cats who were lying dead on the forest floor.

Chapter 28

When investigated the next day, Smokestar had shook his head, declaring FoxClan gone. No cats remained or were heard from again. The dead bodies were removed by the twoleg people. FoxClan was gone. As far as they knew, there were no survivors.

The clan continued with the normal business. NightClan caused trouble. BirdClan, not so much. They lived their daily clan life as if FoxClan was never even a part of the forest.

Three moons passed since Stonepaw's arrival back in SnowClan. He was ten moons and would be a warrior in two moons. The thought made him happy. He was nervous about becoming a warrior though. He would have to talk to Ashclaw about mates.

Cottonnose had taught him good warrior moves and fighting skills, but Stonepaw still missed when Icestar had mentored him. It wasn't the same.

After a long day, Cottonnose had decided to give Stonepaw the day off to rest. Stonepaw decided to go play with Ivygaze's kits. He had been playing with them for awhile now. The kits had grown to like the tom, almost more than their father.

Stonepaw padded to the nursery where Ivygaze sat, licking Softkit's pelt.

"Mom!" she complained. "Can you stop now? You're embarrassing me!"

Ivygaze rolled her eyes and her whiskers twitched in amusement. She let the calico she-cat go.

"Hi, Stonepaw!" Runningkit said. The gray tabby tom raced over to him with a large smile on his face. Runningkit had extremely long legs, making him a fast runner.

"Hi, Runningkit!" he said. "Where's Stonekit?"

Runningkit pointed to the tom who was playing with Dawnfire's kits. Dawnfire was an older she-cat, meaning that this was most likely her first and last litter. Her mate, Graystorm, was also an old cat.

Dawnfire's kits had been born shortly after Ivygaze's kits. She had three kits-two she-cats and a tom. Their names were Splashkit, Sparrowkit, and Morningkit. Stonekit was playing with Morningkit.

"I guess it's just us playing," Stonepaw said to Softkit and Runningkit.

"I can ask if they want to play too," Softkit said. She padded over to Dawnfire's kits, asking if they wanted to play with Stonepaw. The kits nodded.

"Let's all be a clan!" Sparrowkit said. "I call leader!"

"No fair," Splashkit whined.

"You can be my deputy, Splashkit," he said. "I'm Sparrowstar! Leader of SparrowClan!"

"I'm his fearless deputy, Splashfeather!" she yowled.

"I want to be in a clan with Stonekit," Morningkit said.

Splashkit rolled her eyes.

"You can be leader, Morningkit," Stonekit said.

"Okay. I'm Morningstar, leader of um..Snowclan!"

"Who said you got SnowClan?" Runningkit groaned.

"She called it," Stonekit said.

"I'm SnowClan's deputy, Stonefur!" Stonekit yowled.

Runningkit looked at Softkit. "That leaves you and me. I'm

Runningstar! I lead the most fearless clan, TigerClan!"

"And I'm TigerClan's next leader! My name is Softstrike!" she hissed.

"And I'm the large cat that is going to destroy your clan!" Stonepaw yowled.

"We must stand together," Sparrowkit said. "Will you join us SnowClan?"

"SnowClan will join you, Sparrowstar," Morningkit said.

Splashkit looked at Runningkit. "Runningstar, will TigerClan be joining us too."

"No!" Runningkit hissed. "We don't need help!"

"Yes we do!" Softkit yowled. "TigerClan will be joining!"

"Grr, I'm coming!" Stonepaw said, wandering to the six kits.

Morningkit and Softkit screeched and ran wildly around the den while Runningkit leapt on Stonepaw, pawing him lightly.

"That hurts!" Stonepaw yowled, dramatically beginning to limp.

"Attack, Morningstar!" Stonekit hissed.

Stonekit and Morningkit leapt onto Stonepaw while the rest pawed at Stonepaw's legs. Stonepaw fell over and dramatically began to die. "No! How could you...defeat me! Good-bye cruel world!" he said, dramatically dying.

He opened his eyes and laughed. Dawnfire let out a laugh too.

A sudden growl came from the den. "Stonepaw! What are you doing with my kits?!"

Ivygaze stood up, standing in front of Stonepaw and

growling at Ashclaw.

"Move, Ivygaze!" The tom pushed his mate away to face Stonepaw himself.

"I don't know what your problem is, but these are *my* kits! Not yours!"

"I just wanted to play with them!" Stonepaw growled.

"Everyday?!" Ashclaw hissed. "No! That's too far! Ivygaze is *my* mate and these are *my* kits! Leave the nursery!"

"No," Stonepaw growled.

"No?"

"I'm not trying to win Ivygaze or your kits' affection. They don't have a father who comes in and plays with them! He's too busy on patrol! Did you know that they beg for you to play sometimes? Ivygaze always has to shake her head while I explain that he's busy! Be a father, Ashclaw! You're not raising these kits!"

Ivygaze nodded.

Ashclaw turned to Ivygaze, growling. For a second it looked like he would leap at her. Then Ashclaw turned to Stonepaw and leapt at him. Yowling, Ashclaw sliced Stonepaw's cheek, leaving a long scratch down Stonepaw's face. Rolling out of the den, Stonepaw leapt at him, clawing at his fur. He pinned Ashclaw down and growled.

"WHAT IS GOING ON?!" Smokestar hissed.

"He started it!" Ashclaw hissed.

"You know that's a lie!" Stonepaw growled.

"Get off of him, Stonepaw!" Smokestar growled. "What is the matter with you two? We are clanmates! Not enemies!"

"He was trying to steal my mate!" Ashclaw hissed.

"You know that's not true, Ashclaw!" Stonepaw growled.

"ENOUGH!" Smokestar hissed. "Since you two are going to act like kits, then we'll just settle the punishment right now. Ashclaw, no hunting patrols for one moon. And, you have to pick ticks off the elders."

"But, Smokestar," Ashclaw groaned.

"It's final, Ashclaw," he hissed. Smokestar turned to Stonepaw. "Stonepaw, no going to see Ivygaze or the kits for a moon!"

"But, Smokestar," he begged.

"I already said that this was final! Stay away from each other! You two cannot stop fighting, can you?" Smokestar growled and padded away.

"Thanks a lot," Ashclaw hissed.

Stonepaw rolled his eyes and padded to the medicine cat den.

"What happened?" Tawnyheart, the medicine cat apprentice, asked.

"Cat scratched me cheek."

Tawnyheart put some herbs on Stonepaw's cheek, making it sting at first, but then soothing the pain. "Don't touch that cheek for awhile," Tawnyheart warned. "I don't want it getting infected."

"I won't," Stonepaw said, padding to the apprentice den.

"Wow! I can't believe he would just," Fuzzypaw stopped talking when Stonepaw walked into the den.

"Go on! Continue the story of me and Ashclaw's fight!" he hissed. Fuzzypaw continued the story to the other apprentices. Stonepaw sighed and layed down in the nest. StarClan was right. Ashclaw was not the right cat for Ivygaze. Ever since Stonepaw had

returned, the tom had acted vicious.

Chapter 29

A moon. That's how short it was. It felt like many more moons to Stonepaw. Ashclaw had picked ticks off the elder and stayed off patrol. He played with his kits some more, but they would mostly call for Stonepaw to play with them. Ashclaw would glare at him every second he got.

Stonepaw had been suffering not talking to Ivygaze or the kits. It was torture. He had spent moons trying to return to her, and when he did, he was not allowed to talk to her. "What a cruel punishment, Smokestar," Stonepaw whispered.

The good news was that tomorrow the moon would have passed, and Stonepaw could talk to everyone again. Also, since Stonepaw had learned moves as a fox too, Cottonnose thought he was ready to be a warrior. He had talked to Smokestar and Smokestar agreed. Today, he would do his assessment.

Stonepaw yawned and padded out of the apprentice den, the last time he would ever sleep in their. He padded to Cottonnose who smiled brightly at him. "Ready?" he asked.

Stonepaw nodded. "Yes, Cottonnose."

Cottonnose and Stonepaw padded into the forest. It was another beautiful day. One of the last though. Leaf-fall was nearly upon them.

Smokestar stood behind the two. "Ready to begin?" he asked.

Stonepaw nodded.

"Go off and catch prey," Cottonnose said. "We'll meet back here to practice some fighting moves."

Stonepaw nodded. This was one of the most important

hunting trips of his life. He needed to show Smokestar that he could be a warrior. Padding into the woods, he immediately sniffed a mouse. Crouching down in the grass, he leapt, catching it between his paws.

"A mouse isn't enough," Stonepaw said. He buried the small catch in the ground where he would pick it up later. He continued his search for prey. No other prey moved in the woods though. Not a scent passed through Stonepaw's nose.

Stonepaw looked up, noticing a large bird sitting in a tree. It wasn't an eagle, but it was a larger bird. He laughed, thinking of the time when he was Stone. He had leapt from the tree, catching the bird.

The bird payed no attention to Stonepaw. Stonepaw climbed the tree carefully, trying not to disturb the resting bird. As he got nearer to the bird, it seemed as though it might take off. The bird sat carefully, as did Stonepaw. When the bird seemed to calm down again, Stonepaw leapt, piercing his claws into the bird's wing. Unable to fly, the bird staggered around. Stonepaw bit its neck, trying to kill it. The bird hobbled as it dyed and then tumbled to the ground, landing with a huge thud.

Stonepaw eased down the tree to examine his kill. This was the kind of prey that Smokestar wanted him to bring. Burying the bird, Stonepaw padded off farther. He really only needed one or two more pieces of prey.

As he entered the meadow and came into the river, he sniffed. "Water vole," he said, spotting the vole. Once again, he crouched, leaping, and killing the vole. The vole was plump. This was surely all the prey he needed. Picking the mole up in his jaw, he padded back in the woods to find his bird.

The bird's hole remained buried. Dropping the vole, Stonepaw dug it up. Holding the vole and dragging the bird, Stonepaw's mouth was full. How could he get the mouse now? There was enough room to keep it in his mouth though.

Nearing where Smokestar and Cottonnose were, Stonepaw

found the mouse's hole unburied. Another animal had dug the mouse up, leaving Stonepaw with no mouse to present. He sighed, but continued, hoping the prey he had caught would make up for it.

"That's a large bird!" Cottonnose exclaimed as Stonepaw brought his prey to them, dropping the bird and vole on the ground.

"How did you catch that?" Smokestar asked.

"ForestClan blood. I'm good at climbing trees," Stonepaw said.

"Wait? You're ForestClan?" Cottonnose asked.

"My mom was," Stonepaw said. "My father too."

"Well that surely helped you," Smokestar said. "Show me some of your fighting moves."

Stonepaw nodded, padding over to Cottonnose. Cottonnose leapt at him, knocking him over. Ready to swipe, Stonepaw crouched under him, knocking Cottonnose off his feet. Pinning Cottonnose, Cottonnose swiped under him, but Stonepaw was clever. He jumped up, landing on Cottonnose's back, pinning him a different way.

"Very good," Smokestar said. "I think you would be an excellent warrior. Cottonnose, it's up to you. Will Stonepaw become a warrior or train for another moon?"

"I think he's ready, Smokestar," Cottonnose said.

Stonepaw smiled with a large grin.

"Let's perform the ceremony then," Smokestar said, beginning to wander back to camp. Cottonnose and Stonepaw got up, following him.

As they arrived back at camp, Smokestar got onto the tall rock. "ALL CATS OLD ENOUGH TO CATCH THEIR OWN PREY JOIN BENEATH THE ROCK FOR A CLAN MEETING!"

Cats began to gather as Stonepaw stood on the rock. He saw Ivygaze and her kits smiling at him happily.

"I call upon my warrior ancestors to look upon this apprentice. He has trained hard to follow your noble code, and I grant him to you as a warrior in return. Stonepaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code with all your life, even if it means risking it?"

"I do," Stonepaw said.

"Then by the powers of StarClan, I give you your warrior name of Stoneclaw. Serve the clan well."

"STONECLAW! STONECLAW!" The clan yowled.

Stoneclaw smiled at all his clan members. The moment he had been dreaming since birth was finally here. He was a warrior at last.

As the cats left, Cottonnose padded up to Stoneclaw. "Congratulations," he said. "You're on vigil tonight."

Stoneclaw nodded. He had to watch the camp all night without talking.

He looked towards Ivygaze, but Ashclaw quickly escorted them away. There was always the next day for Ivygaze to congratulate him.

As the sun went down, Stoneclaw sat as the first signs of leaf-bare came. The first leaf fell on the tip of his nose and a gentle breeze swayed. It was going to be a long night.

Chapter 30

I have had MULTIPLE comments also complaining about Marshmallowheart's name. Yes, it is a stupid name, but I had run out of name for white cats. Cats don't know what marshmallows are (though there is such thing as a marshmallow plant, you know??). I'd really appreciate it if readers would quit commenting this fact as I have been told several times already.

Stoneclaw sighed as he woke up in the warriors den. Today he would have to argue with Ashclaw. But he would save it for after the kits' apprentice ceremonies.

One moon had passed since Stoneclaw had become a warrior. Today, Cottonnose's kits would be warriors and Ivygaze's kits would be apprentices.

Stoneclaw had enjoyed chatting with Ivygaze and her kits again, but now he wouldn't see the kits as much because of their training. He would wish them the best of luck though.

As the sun rose, cats began to get out of their dens. Stoneclaw padded to the fresh-kill pile and ate a bird by himself. Ivygaze was busy grooming her kits for the ceremony while Ashclaw stood beside her.

Ashclaw had gotten worse. He constantly yelled at Ivygaze and his kits. Stoneclaw didn't know if it was official, but he had begun to believe that Ivygaze did not care for her mate anymore. The kits rarely talked to him too.

As Stoneclaw finished his morning meal, he glanced as Smokestar walked on the tall rock. The tom was a fairly old cat. He only had about two lives left. Cloudfur would be leader soon.

"ALL CATS OLD ENOUGH TO CATCH THEIR OWN PREY

JOIN BENEATH THE TALL ROCK FOR A CLAN MEETING!" he yowled. Cats began to form under the rock. Stoneclaw smiled as he saw Ivygaze's kits bounce out of the den.

The first cats who walked onto the rock were Cottonnose's kits, Fuzzypaw and Marshmallowpaw. They had grown in size and skill during the six moons they trained.

"I call upon my warrior ancestors to look upon these two apprentices. They have trained hard to follow your noble code and I grant them to you as warriors in return. Fuzzypaw and Marshmallowpaw, do you agree to uphold the warrior code, even if it risks your life?"

"I do," Fuzzypaw said.

"I do," Marshmallowpaw said.

"Then by the power of StarClan, I give you your warrior names. Fuzzypaw, from this day forward you shall be known as Fuzzytail. Marshmallowpaw, from this day forward you shall be known as Marshmallowheart," Smokestar said.

"FUZZYTAIL! MARSHMALLOWHEART!" the clan yowled.

Cottonnose and Snowtail padded up to their kits, licking them affectionately. Fuzzytail padded off to Dovepaw, the apprentice he loved while Marshmallowheart stayed put with her parents.

"We also have another ceremony to perform," Smokestar said. "Kits, come up here."

Not only did Ivygaze's kits come up, but Dawnfire's kits too. The six kits would be made apprentices.

"Softkit, Runningkit, Stonekit, Sparrowkit, Splashkit, and Morningkit have reached six moons which means they are ready to become apprentices. Softkit, from this day forward, until you receive your warrior name, you shall be known as Softpaw. Mousestripe," Smokestar said.

The daughter of Smokestar, who resembled him, padded forward.

"You are kind yet fierce. Teach these skills onto Softpaw," he said.

Softpaw padded down from the rock and touched noses with the she-cat.

The process continued until all kits had received their apprentice name and mentors. The clan soon began to yowl, "SOFTPAW! RUNNINGPAW! STONEPAW! SPARROWPAW! SPLASHPAW! MORNINGPAW!"

The kits padded down from the rock, running to their mother. They barely made eye contact with their father. Ivygaze's kits padded away from her and went to their mentors, ready to start training.

Stoneclaw padded over to Ivygaze. "They've grown so much."

Ashclaw stepped forward, growling at Stoneclaw. "They aren't yours!"

Ivygaze held Ashclaw back, staring at Stoneclaw with pleading eyes and nodding for Stoneclaw to say something back.

"Has StarClan said anything to you lately?" Stoneclaw asked.

"No!" Ashclaw hissed.

"The woods. That's where we'll go," Stoneclaw said. "Ivygaze will come with us."

"I know what you're doing," Ashclaw growled.

Stoneclaw growled, but then realized he needed Ivygaze's opinion. "Cottonnose!" he yowled. The tom looked up while Snowtail stood beside him. "We need you to come with us."

Snowtail growled, but Cottonnose rested his tail on her shoulder. He padded over to Stoneclaw.

"What?" he asked.

"We need you to translate for Ivygaze," Stoneclaw said.

"Now?"

"No, we're going in the woods first," Stoneclaw said.

"Why?" Cottonnose asked.

"You'll see," Stoneclaw replied.

The four padded into the woods, not talking at all. Ashclaw grumbled the whole way, not lifting his head as they padded along the forest.

Once they got to the meadow, Stoneclaw stopped and sat down. Ivygaze did the same. Ashclaw stood, growling.

"What is this all about?!" he hissed.

Cottonnose nodded, agreeing with Ashclaw.

"Sit down first," Stoneclaw said.

Cottonnose sat down while Ashclaw hesitated. Finally, he sat down.

"StarClan has told me that Ivygaze is not supposed to be mates with you any longer, Ashclaw," Stoneclaw said. "She's supposed to be my mate."

"LIES!" he hissed. "YOU'RE MAKING THIS UP!"

"Stoneclaw did spend a lot of time in StarClan," Cottonnose pointed out. "Plus, you've been nothing but a fox-heart lately, Ashclaw."

"How dare you!" Ashclaw hissed. "Ivygaze, you don't agree with this, do you?"

"Talk for her, Cottonnose," Stoneclaw said.

Ivygaze concentrated and then Cottonnose spoke.

"She says, 'At first I didn't believe it, but you treat me like mouse-dung now, Ashclaw. You treat the kits the same way. You need to act like a real mate'," Cottonnose said.

Ashclaw growled at Ivygaze. "HE WAS TRYING TO GET RID OF ME ALL ALONG! I KNEW WHEN HE ARRIVED THERE WAS SOMETHING GOING ON!"

"I'm sick of hiding secrets!" Cottonnose yowled. "You treat my sister and my friend horribly Ashclaw! In case you didn't know, Stoneclaw was Ivygaze's old lover before he died! That's why he acts so kind towards her."

Ashclaw growled, kicking up dirt. "But we were always meant to be together, Ivygaze."

Ivygaze concentrated as Cottonnose spoke.

"Ivygaze says, 'When we first met, you were a shy and kinder kit. You made me get over Stonepaw. We fell in love and had kits. But when Stonepaw arrived, you took him as a threat. That's when you turned all dark, never showing that kindness and happiness again,'"Cottonnose said.

Ashclaw growled. "IS THIS WHAT YOU WANT THEN?! YOU JUST WANT TO BE WITH YOUR OLD LOVER?! IF YOU BECOME MATES WITH STONEPAW, I AM FULLY IN CHARGE OF OUR KITS!"

Ivygaze stood up, hissing loudly.

"For the love of StarClan!" Ashclaw hissed at Cottonnose. "What is she thinking now?!"

Cottonnose spoke. "She says, 'You were never a father to them. You never came to visit them! You had your chance! If you go near those kits, I'm not afraid to attack you! They're not your responsibility!'"

"YES THEY ARE!" Ashclaw hissed. "THEY'RE MINE!"

"They're smart enough to stay away from you," Stoneclaw growled.

Ashclaw growled then launched at Ivygaze, tearing her pelt. She yowled loudly. "NO!" Stoneclaw hissed, launching himself onto Ashclaw and knocking him off. Cottonnose did the same, attacking Ashclaw. Once the two had pinned him down, Stoneclaw spoke.

"Get out of here, Ashclaw! You just attacked her! You don't love her!" Stoneclaw hissed.

"FINE!" Ashclaw hissed, knocking the two off. "You can have her, Stoneclaw, but I *will* get revenge. Just wait..." he hissed, running back into the woods.

Stoneclaw padded over to the injured Ivygaze. "Are you okay?" Stoneclaw asked.

Ivygaze nodded. She had a long scratch down her pelt.

"We need to tell Smokestar," Cottonnose said. "We can't have Ashclaw abusing you like this."

Ivygaze shook her head, in tears.

"No? Why not?" Stoneclaw growled. "He attacked you!"

"She still cares for him, Stoneclaw. She can't see him exiled. It would break her heart to see the cat she loved launched away forever," Cottonnose said.

Ivygaze nodded.

"Alright," Stoneclaw said. "We won't tell Smokestar, but something tells me that Ashclaw is not done yet..."

The three padded back to camp. They would tell Spottedmask and Tawnyheart that Ivygaze had been attacked by a badger and that Cottonnose and Stoneclaw had fought it off. Stoneclaw hoped they would believe it. As much as he wanted to

tell Smokestar the truth, he couldn't. He promised Ivygaze that he wouldn't.

Chapter 31

Stoneclaw and Ivygaze sat in the warriors den. The two had become mates after Ashclaw had run off. Thankfully, Spottedmask and Tawnyheart had believed that she had been attacked by a badger, thus saving Ashclaw from getting exiled.

Ivygaze sat, watching her kits pad off to train. Stoneclaw licked Ivygaze's ear. Ivygaze turned and smiled.

"I'm glad we're back together," Stoneclaw said.

Ivygaze nodded.

Stoneclaw nuzzled her affectionately. It felt great to know that Ivygaze was his again. If Ashclaw layed a claw on Ivygaze or her kits, Stoneclaw would go after him.

Ashclaw had returned to camp the previous day like nothing had happened at all. Cats knew he was no longer mates with Ivygaze though.

Ivygaze touched her tail to Stoneclaw's and then pointed her tail to across the camp.

Stoneclaw looked seeing Ashclaw talking to Marshmallowheart. The two were laughing together and talking.

"No, they-they couldn't..." Stoneclaw said. Maybe they were just friends. Maybe that was all. Cottonnose wouldn't be happy though.

Noticing that they were being stared at, Ashclaw and Marshmallowheart walked over to the den.

"Hello, Ivygaze," Ashclaw smiled.

Ivygaze let out a low growl.

"This is my new mate, Marshmallowheart," Ashclaw said.

No. It was true. This was his revenge? Being mates with Marshmallowheart? For Cottonnose maybe, but not Stoneclaw. He knew how horrible Cottonnose would feel when he heard the news.

"Hi," Marshmallowheart said. She obviously did not know what Ashclaw was really like. "I thought I would never get a mate, but then Ashclaw came along and it was love."

Ashclaw smiled. "Yes, dear. Why don't you go pick out some food from the fresh kill pile and we'll share." Ashclaw gave an evil grin and padded off.

Ivygaze's eyes widened.

"What?" Stoneclaw asked. Suddenly he knew what she meant. "He's-he's using her, isn't he? To make you jealous? He's going to be mates with Marshmallowheart, maybe have kits with her, and then leave her..."

Ivygaze nodded.

"We have to tell her!"

Ivygaze shook her head, pointing to Cottonnose who was returning to patrols.

"I see. Cottonnose has to tell her then," Stoneclaw said.

They watched as Cottonnose began to question Marshmallowheart. When finding out that they were mates, Cottonnose knocked Ashclaw over, pinning him. Marshmallowheart pushed her father off, not knowing why he was doing such a thing. Ashclaw nodded and Cottonnose ran off to Ivygaze and Stoneclaw.

"Did you hear?!"

Stoneclaw and Ivygaze nodded.

"What do we do?" Stoneclaw asked. "He's obviously using her!"

"I know," Cottonnose said. "I-I don't know if I can tell her or not."

"Well not right now," Stoneclaw said. "You'll have to wait a few weeks."

"A few weeks?! Do you know what he could do to her by then?! He could completely make her go crazy for him!" Cottonnose hissed.

Ivygaze rested her tail on her brother's shoulder, easing his anger.

"A few weeks," he sighed. "I hope Marshmallowheart will be okay. I'm going to tell Snowtail though."

"No!" Stoneclaw hissed.

"Why? She won't tell anyone," Cottonnose said.

"Not that!" Stoneclaw growled. "Do you realize how fierce Snowtail is? She'd try to murder Ashclaw on the spot! Then the truth would come out and Ashclaw would be exiled. Wait a few weeks, then tell Snowtail and Fuzzytail. Then we'll tell Marshmallowheart."

"It's going to hurt me," Cottonnose said. "But okay. I'll wait."

Ivygaze smiled at her brother, but Cottonnose couldn't smile. It would be a hard couple of weeks for him.

Chapter 32

Half a moon had passed since Marshmallowheart and Ashclaw became mates. Marshmallowheart had no idea what she was getting herself into. Stoneclaw decided to let Cottonnose tell his family about Ashclaw.

"You're sure?" Cottonnose asked.

Stoneclaw nodded. "Just make sure Snowtail doesn't murder him."

"Will do," Cottonnose said, padding over to Snowtail and calling Fuzzytail over.

"I hope everything goes well," Stoneclaw said to Ivygaze.

Ivygaze nodded.

"Guess all we can do is watch," Stoneclaw said.

Ivygaze dipped her head then stared intently at the family.

Although Stoneclaw couldn't hear Cottonnose from across the camp, he knew what he was saying. As Cottonnose explained, he watched as he saw Snowtail sheathe and unsheathe her claws rapidly. Fuzzytail seemed utterly confused. As Cottonnose finished, he had to hold Snowtail back from lashing at Ashclaw. Cottonnose spoke some more words to her, making Snowtail sheathe her claws and act calm.

Stoneclaw glanced, seeing Ashclaw staring wide-eyed at the family who were whispering. Ashclaw quickly beckoned Marshmallowheart to the forest to hunt.

"WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!" Snowtail hissed.

Ashclaw ignored her, quickly running into the woods.

Stoneclaw and Ivygaze padded over quickly to Snowtail, Cottonnose, and Fuzzytail.

"What's he doing?" Stoneclaw asked.

"I don't know," Cottonnose replied. "But I don't think it's something good."

"They were fighting just before we began to talk," Fuzzytail explained. "When Cottonnose finished talking, Ashclaw acted all nice again and ran off with Marshmallowheart."

"Maybe they're leaving the clan!" Snowtail hissed. "My daughter can't run off like that! Tell Smokestar! Tell the clan!"

Ivygaze hissed, shaking her head.

"No," Cottonnose said. "The five of us will go after them. For all we know, they could really just be hunting."

"Okay," Stoneclaw said. "Should we split up?"

Cottonnose nodded. "My family will stick together. Stoneclaw and Ivygaze will be a team too."

They both nodded, padding into the woods. Cottonnose and his family took a different route into the woods.

"MARSHMALLOWHEART! ASHCLAW!" Stoneclaw yowled as he and Ivygaze pondered through the forest.

No sound came. All Stoneclaw and Ivygaze heard was the falling of leaves. They were in the middle of leaf-fall.

"MARSHMALLOWHEART!" Stoneclaw yowled.

As they continued to walk, Stoneclaw and Ivygaze heard a loud screech. It sounded like Marshmallowheart!

"We have to run!" Stoneclaw hissed. The two ran through the forest, running to find Marshmallowheart. They heard a loud crunching of leaves ahead of them. Something had run away.

Out of breath, the two stopped. "Marshmallowheart!" Stoneclaw hissed. There was no reply.

Ivygaze sniffed the air. She stopped, eyes widened. She had picked up Marshmallowheart's scent! She pointed her tail to some bushes. Stoneclaw followed Ivygaze through the bushes. The bushes went on forever, trapping the two cats inside. They gasped once they came to a clearing.

"No...," Stoneclaw said. "We were too late."

A trail of blood came from the clearing. The trail continued until it came to the body...of a cat. Marshmallowheart's white pelt was coated in blood. Her throat was a bloody mess. The she-cat was dead. A bit of gray fur was lying around the dead body.

"Ashclaw," Stoneclaw whispered.

"I hear something!" a voice came. It was Snowtail. She gasped as she came upon the blood trail.

"No," she said. "NO!" she screeched. "MY KIT!" she ran to Marshmallowheart in tears. Cottonnose and Fuzzytail followed. At the sight of Marshmallowheart dead, they looked down at their paws.

"MARSHMALLOWHEART!" Snowtail screeched. "I'M GOING TO KILL YOU, ASHCLAW!"

"We need to find him," Fuzzytail hissed. "We can't let him get away with this!"

Everyone nodded except Ivygaze. She still was trying to protect the tom. The five left Marshmallowheart's body, which they would retrieve later, to look for the Ashclaw.

"ASHCLAW!" Cottonnose hissed.

The cats yowled, looking for the gray tom. They suddenly gasped as a pile of leaves flew up in the air. The tom was taking off again!

Snowtail began to run with her claws unsheathed and teeth bared. All of the cats went into a full run, trying to keep up with the fierce she-cat. Suddenly they came to a halt, stopping at a waterfall.

"Ashclaw!" Fuzzytail hissed. "Why did you murder her?!"

The tom sat near the edge of the waterfall, looking down below. His eyes were swollen with tears. He turned around. Stoneclaw gasped to see his blood-stained paws.

"Let me explain," he began.

"YOU BETTER!" Snowtail hissed. "OR ELSE I'LL KILL YOU RIGHT HERE!"

"Stop it, Snowtail!" Cottonnose hissed. "You know that's against the warrior code."

"He killed our daughter, Cottonnose!" Snowtail hissed. "He deserves to die!"

"Don't you worry about me. I'm going to kill myself anyway," Ashclaw hissed.

Ivygaze stepped forward towards the gray tom.

"Ivygaze," Stoneclaw warned.

The tom looked at the five cats. "I know you all want answers, so I'll give you answers," he said.

Ivygaze sat down the next to the tom as he began to explain. "When I first met Ivygaze, I was only a kit. We played and laughed together. I always secretly had a crush on her."

Ivygaze twitched her whiskers in amusement and nodded.

"But then, Cottonnose told me that she probably wasn't going to be happy constantly because of Stonepaw's death. When I asked who Stonepaw was, Cottonnose just said it was a cat she knew as a kit. Ivygaze would have mood swings. At times she would be fairly happy, at other times she would be depressed,"

Ashclaw explained.

"I ASKED FOR YOU STORY!" Snowtail hissed. "NOT IVYGAZE'S!"

"Do you want to hear this or not?" Ashclaw asked. "If you murder me now, you'll never understand."

"Fine," she hissed.

"I was always there to comfort her when she was depressed or sad. Soon, we fell in love," he said. For the first time, he actually smiled at Ivygaze. "We became mates. Then Ivygaze told me she was expecting kits. It was one of the happiest times of my life. We had three beautiful kits. I was surprised when she named one of them Stonekit after you, Stoneclaw. I was hoping that she had forgotten Stonepaw. I loved Ivygaze with all my heart. Then, you showed up, Stoneclaw.

"I knew that Ivygaze would be so excited to see you again. I knew that she would never forget you then. I knew she would forget about me. You began to play with the kits, Stoneclaw. You hung out more. That's when I realized something was up. I knew you were more than friends. I couldn't go see Ivygaze or my kits because it hurt me too much. You were always there, Stoneclaw. When I did go, they would call for you. Not me. It was like you were their father.

"Then you told me that Stoneclaw was actually your old lover, Ivygaze. I was angry and upset. When I was a kit, my mother dissapeared often. I had to take care of my sister, Cindertail. Once, when my mother did return, she had another kit with her. Another family...I was angry and depressed at that time, especially when my mother died in that fire. Ivygaze had been there to comfort me and make me happy again. All of that happiness had died when you told me the truth a few weeks ago.

"I tried to make everyone jealous by becoming mates with Marshmallowheart. Jealousy and grief had messed up my mind. It was true, I was using Marshmallowheart. I didn't really love her, but I knew how desperate she was for a mate. That's why I became

mates with her. She turned out to be very in love with me. I knew I couldn't stay this way forever.

"When you told everyone, Cottonnose, I knew I would be kicked out of the clan, exiled, you name it. I knew that Marshmallowheart wouldn't believe it and insist on being with me anyway. I also knew that Ivygaze would never love me again. Marshmallowheart was no use to me, but I couldn't tell her 'no mates' anymore. It would break her heart. So, there was only one thing to do and that was to kill her. Again, my sadness and pain had made me gone crazy, so I thought I would be doing myself a favor. When the life left her, I felt like a monster. I ran off, scared of myself. I felt horrible taking her life like that. What some cats could do so easily, hurt me. I knew that I needed to murder myself because I felt horrible. It was the only way to be myself again."

Ivygaze shook her head at Ashclaw.

"No, Ivygaze. It's been decided. I'm jumping down that waterfall. If you jump down it too, I'll kill you," he said.

Ivygaze laughed, but then looked down again, sad that her mate was going to commit suicide.

"GO AHEAD! DIE!" Snowtail hissed. "I DON'T CARE! YOU DESERVE IT!"

"Of course I do," Ashclaw said.

"I'm sorry," Stoneclaw said. "You have no idea what I've been through to get here."

"No, I don't," Ashclaw said. "But I don't need to know your story. Ivygaze, I'm sorry for what I did. I still love you and I always will."

Ivygaze smiled, nuzzling her ex-mate.

Ashclaw turned to Cottonnose's family. "I'm sorry I killed Marshmallowheart. I know she was dear to your hearts. Good-bye, SnowClan. I have some talking to do with my mother now."

He turned around facing the water. Suddenly, he jumped. Ivygaze screeched, putting her paw into the water, trying to grab onto Ashclaw, but he was already at the bottom.

"No," Stoneclaw said. "It's too late now." Ivygaze turned away, padding down the waterfall. A gray body bobbed on the water.

Ivygaze rushed into the water, retrieving Ashclaw's body. She cried and licked it affectionately.

"Ivygaze, we have to go," Stoneclaw said.

Ivygaze shook her head. Stoneclaw turned to Cottonnose. "Go retrieve Marshmallowheart's body and bring it to camp. We'll take Ashclaw's."

Cottonnose nodded, going off with Snowtail and Fuzzytail.

"Ivygaze," Stoneclaw said. "I've lost love before. It's hard. We have to move on."

Ivygaze shook her head at Stoneclaw.

"I have lost love, Ivygaze. I never told you this, but I tried to return shortly after my death. I was tricked by Moonstar. She turned me into a fox. I was a fox for many moons. I had a mate and kits. My mate died and most of my kits too. Icestar brought me back. She erased me from the foxes, changing their lives. They're all alive now, but they don't know me. Isn't it better to love someone who died and they still know and love you, than to have someone you love disappear from you and never know you existed."

Ivygaze nodded.

"Now get that body. We're bringing it back to camp."

Ivygaze nodded. She picked up Ashclaw's wet body and dragged it on the ground. They soon arrived into camp. Marshmallowheart's body was already being buried.

"He murdered himself," Stoneclaw said to Smokestar.

"Ashclaw murdered himself because he knew he had done wrong."

Smokestar nodded. Ashclaw's body was soon buried too. Ivygaze, Cindertail, Softpaw, Runningpaw, and Stonepaw sat vigil for Ashclaw while Cottonnose, Snowtail, and Fuzzytail sat vigil for Marshmallowheart. Stoneclaw sat vigil for both cats. They had both been brave cats and good warriors. Stoneclaw hoped Ashclaw walked in StarClan, not the Dark Forest.

The stars shined brightly overhead and Stoneclaw sat, looking into the stars. It felt as if StarClan was watching all of them tonight.

Chapter 33

Many moons had passed since the deaths of Marshmallowheart and Ashclaw. Everyone was heartbroken by the loss. The clan had entered leaf-bare, which had showered the clan in more depression. Green-cough had filled the air, sickening many cats.

The only good news had been that Mousestripe was expecting Reedtail's kits. It was a shame that they were to be born in leaf-bare. With less food and the freezing chills, it wasn't guaranteed that the kits would survive.

Smokestar was on his last life too. When the old tom died, Cloudfur would take over the leader position. Stoneclaw knew that Cloudfur would make a good leader. He was one of the most loyal and strong clan members in SnowClan.

Stoneclaw and Ivygaze slept side-by-side, trying to block out the chills of leaf-bare. A thin layer of snow had covered the ground, causing those cats with thin fur to freeze their pelts off.

A scream echoed from the nursery. Stoneclaw pricked his ears, then opened his eyes. Ivygaze did the same.

"What was that?" Stoneclaw whispered.

Ivygaze shrugged. Padding to the nursery, they saw that Smokestar, Reedtail, and Thornfrost were already there. It was Mousestripe who had released the scream. The pregnant she-cat sat in the den with swollen eyes.

"Exactly what happened?" Smokestar asked.

Knowing that this probably wasn't their business, Ivygaze and Stoneclaw stood to the side of the den, trying to be unseen by the three cats.

"I-I had a dream. More like a nightmare. Except...it was real. Moonstar came to me."

Stoneclaw growled at the name. Moonstar was still present among the clans.

"She-she said she was going to curse my kits. She was going to take over their bodies and rule the clan like she's tried to do before..."

Stoneclaw dipped his head. He had heard the stories about Moonstar trying to take over cat's bodies before. Apparently she had taken over Smokestar's, Petalnose's, and Cindertail's body as well. All of her attempts had failed.

"Don't worry," Thornfrost said. "I won't let them hurt you."

A growl echoed from Reedtail. "What is your problem, Thornfrost?! I know that you used to love Mousestripe, but that doesn't mean you're the father to these kits!"

"Reedtail," Mousestripe began, trying to calm the tom.

"GET OUT OF HERE, THORNFROST!" he hissed. "THESE ARE *MY* KITS, AND THIS IS MY MATE!"

Hurt, the golden-brown tom rushed out of the camp into the woods.

"I don't think we were supposed to hear that," Stoneclaw said.

Ivygaze nodded.

Quietly, the two padded away into the nursery. Was it true? Moonstar was coming back?

The clan had been informed with the news shortly after Mousestripe's dream. Smokestar had ordered patrols to be stepped up, in case the she-cat dared to enter the SnowClan territory. As a Dark Forest cat, it was completely possible.

The days of leaf-bare had continued, causing more snow to fall and less prey to be caught. Stoneclaw thought back to last leaf-bare when he and Lily were falling in love. Mesmerized by the thoughts, he shook his head. No, he was mates with Ivygaze now.

Mousestripe's kits were due any day. Every cat was scared of the outcome. Would Moonstar succeed? Would Mousestripe's kits become cursed.

During a particularly cold day, a scream came from the nursery. "MY KITS ARE COMING!" Mousestripe shrieked.

Stoneclaw and Ivygaze rushed to the nursery, as did Smokestar, Reedtail, and...Thornfrost, once again.

"It'll be okay," Smokestar said. "Spottedmask has everything under control. Sandpaw, too."

It had turned out that Tawnyheart had given birth to Thornfrost's kits. Everyone believed they were Moonstream's since Moonstream was Thornfrost's mate at the time, but they had turned out to be Tawnyheart's. Tawnyheart had broken the medicine cat law and was forced to remain a warrior.

Sandpaw, one of Tawnyheart's kits, took over the position of medicine cat apprentice. Since Spottedmask was an old cat, and was hoping to retire before Tawnyheart's incident, Sandpaw would take over medicine cat once Spottedmask named her a full medicine cat.

Mousestripe screeched again. Spottedmask and Sandpaw stood by her side. Only Smokestar and Reedtail were allowed in the den. Outside of the den sat, Thornfrost, Dawnpool, who was Mousestripe's sister, Bluewhisker, who was also Mousestripe's sister, and Lilywhisker, her mother.

Stoneclaw gasped as a shady silhouette appeared. Coming into a clearer view, Stoneclaw growled, seeing the familiar silver-blue she-cat before him.

"Moonstar!" Smokestar hissed.

"Smokestar! I haven't seen you since you were an itty-bitty apprentice," she laughed. She looked at Mousestripe. "Prepare for your kits to have the worst experience ever!"

"MOONSTAR!" Stoneclaw hissed.

Moonstar gasped, looking towards Stoneclaw. "Oh, Stoneclaw! Or should I say...Stone? We meet again. It's a shame that Lily has forgotten all about you now. I hear she gave birth to five lovely kits."

"You little--," Stoneclaw was about to leap at the she-cat, but Smokestar stopped him.

"I know you two may have unfinished business, but this is Mousestripe's battle to fight, not yours," Smokestar hissed.

Ivygaze pulled her mate away. She stroked him with her tail, trying to comfort him.

Mousestripe screeched again as the first kit was born. It was a brown tabby tom. Moonstar laughed as his brown pelt quickly turned into a silver-blue pelt. His eyes lit up a blood red, just as Moonstar's had.

"NO!" Smokestar hissed, launching at Moonstar.

Moonstar laughed, quickly slicing his throat. Smokestar layed on the ground, dying. "Good luck," Smokestar whispered.

Pain and agony hurt Mousestripe, causing her to scream again.

The next kit was born. It was a white tom with black spots, that looked like Mousestripe. But his pelt quickly turned into a silver-blue pelt too, his eyes flashing a dark red like the other kit.

"NO! STOP THIS, MOONSTAR!" Reedtail hissed, launching at the she-cat. Reedtail put up more of a fight than Smokestar, but he quickly too was injured. He fell into Smokestar's pool of blood. More blood filled the nursery as Reedtail began to bleed.

"I love you," Reedtail whispered to Mousestripe.

"I love you too," Mousestripe whispered, licking his ears. Reedtail's eyes soon became fixed on nothing, indicating he was dead.

Mousestripe screeched the loudest this time as a white she-cat with ginger spots was born. Stoneclaw winced, waiting for the kit's pelt to change.

The she-cat's pelt didn't change, but instead, began to shine.

"NO!" Moonstar hissed. As the kit's pelt shined brighter, Moonstar leapt at the kit. The light blinded Stoneclaw's eyes.

When he could see again, Moonstar was gone. Reedtail and Smokestar layed dead on the floor. The two toms seemed to be okay, their pelts still remaining Moonstar's color. The she-cat was fast asleep.

"W-What happened?" Thornfrost asked.

"The prophecy!" Mousestripe gasped. Thornfrost padded forward, nuzzling Mousestripe.

Ivygaze turned to Stoneclaw, giving him a confused look. Stoneclaw shrugged, not knowing why the tom was acting so gentle to the she-cat.

"What will you call them?" Thornfrost asked.

As Stoneclaw looked closer, he noticed the toms were missing patches of fur. One was missing some of his pelt and tail. The other was missing fur on one hind leg and one paw.

"The one with the fur missing on the tail will be Graykit," she said. She looked at the other tom. "The other will be Stormkit." She looked lastly at the she-cat who slept peacefully. "This will be Shinykit."

"Lovely names," Sandpaw said.

"It's a shame that Smokestar and Reedtail aren't here," Cloudfur said, padding forward.

"Cloudfur!" Dawnpool exclaimed. "You're our new leader now."

"Right you are," Cloudfur said. "Spottedmask, if you would accompany me. We will perform the burial for Reedtail and Smokestar when I return."

"Get some cats to help you clean the nursery, Sandpaw," Spottedmask said as she padded off. Sandpaw nodded.

As Cloudfur walked off, cats began to cheer screaming, "Cloudstar! Cloudstar!"

Stoneclaw looked back at Mousestripe. Her eyes were swollen with tears as she looked at her dead father and mate. She held her kits close, licking them affectionately. Stoneclaw sighed. Leaf-bare was a time of sadness...

Chapter 34

Many things had happened during leaf-bare. Cloudstar had received his nine lives and had taken over SnowClan. He had appointed Thornfrost as his deputy.

As for Mousestripe, her kits had been doing well. Shinykit was just as lovely as any other kit. The curse had left Graykit and Stormkit, but a small part of Moonstar still lived within them, so at times they would lash out without any warning. Mousestripe took extra special care of them.

It had turned out that the night Mousestripe was given the nightmare, she had gone after Thornfrost in the forest. Mousestripe admitted she did love Thornfrost, so the two had become secret mates. The kits were Reedtail's, not Thornfrost's. Reedtail had never known the two were secret mates. Mousestripe still loved the brown tabby tom though. At times, she called for Reedtail, even though she knew he wasn't there. Thornfrost was there to comfort his mate, Mousestripe.

As leaf-bare began to come to an end, the cats rejoiced. It had been a horrible leaf-bare, one that had left many scarred. Cindertail's mate, Yarrowwhisker, had been lost to green cough. Her two toms were heartbroken at their father's death. Plus, Foxflame's kit, Littlepelt, had also died of greencough. Foxflame and his mate, Petalstream, had lost two kits during leaf-bare. Reedtail was their son.

Soon, only patches of snow remained. Birds began to chirp. Squirrels and mice entered out of their dens.

Stoneclaw stood next to Ivygaze for an important day. Ivygaze smiled as her kits stood on the tall rock. Dawnfire's kits stood as well. They were to be made warriors.

"I call upon my warrior ancestors to look upon these apprentices," Cloudstar began. "They have trained hard to follow

your noble code, and I grant them to you as warriors in return. Softpaw, you have a soft heart and show much kindness. From this day forward, you shall be known as Softheart!"

The calico she-cat smiled from the rock, looking towards her mother. Cloudstar turned to the other apprentices. "Runningpaw, you are a fast cat with sharp abilities. From this day forward, you shall be known as Runninglegs!" The gray tabby tom smiled at his new warrior name.

Cloudstar looked at Stonepaw. "Stonepaw, you are a kind and generous cat. You have been loyal to SnowClan and will always be. From this day forward, you shall be known as Stonecloud!"

Stoneclaw gasped at the name. He thought of Stonecloud, Icestar's mother, who had shown him StarClan and everything in it.

Soon, Cloudstar had named Dawnfire's kits too, and the clan began to shout in cheers. "SOFTHEART! RUNNINGLEGS! STONECLOUD! SPLASHLEAP! SPARROWWING! MORNINGPELT!"

As the cats left, the three ran talked to Dawnfire's kits, exchanging words and smiles. Soon, Ivygaze's kits padded to their mother.

"Wasn't I great, Mother?" Softheart asked.

Ivygaze nodded.

Cottonnose smiled. "She's very proud of all of you, and I'm sure Ashclaw would be too."

Ivygaze let out a nod and licked Softheart's pelt.

"I'm not a kit anymore!" Softheart laughed.

Runninglegs let out a laugh. "Sure you are."

"Oh, stop it," Softheart said, lightly pawing at her brother.

"Well, Sparrowwing asked me to be his mate," Softheart proclaimed. "And I said yes!"

"Congratulations," Stoneclaw said.

"Well I asked Splashleap to be my mate. She couldn't refuse!" Runninglegs bragged.

Softheart laughed, running off with her brother.

Stonecloud came forward. Ivygaze licked his ear and Stonecloud smiled.

"Great job," Stoneclaw said.

"Thanks, Stoneclaw. You've always been my role model," Stonecloud said.

Stoneclaw smiled. "That's great. How are things with you and Morningpelt?"

"We're mates now," Stonecloud said.

"Congrats," Cottonnose said.

Ivygaze smiled as her three kits went off to start their own families.

"Ivygaze thinks they don't need her anymore," Cottonnose said.

"Of course they need you," Stoneclaw said. "You're their mother. You'll always be their for them."

Ivygaze smiled and Stoneclaw nuzzled her. The three sat, watching the newly warriors explore.

Chapter 35

Stonecloud rushed towards Ivygaze and Stoneclaw. "I have great news!" he yowled. It was the most excited he had ever acted.

"What is it?" Stoneclaw asked.

"Morningpelt is expecting kits!" Stonecloud gasped.

Ivygaze smiled.

"I'm sure you'll be a great father," Stoneclaw said.

Stonecloud nodded. "I can't wait for my kits to be born! They'll be the best warriors ever!" he said.

As he padded off, Stoneclaw turned to Ivygaze who was smiling. "Maybe we'll have kits one day," Stoneclaw said to her.

Ivygaze twitched her whiskers in amusement, lightly swatting him on the head.

Stoneclaw laughed. "I know. It won't happen. I'm just glad that I'm here with you," Stoneclaw said.

Ivygaze smiled at him, lightly licking his cheek.

"THEY'RE COMING!" Stonecloud screeched. "MORNINGPELT'S KITS ARE COMING!" Cats rushed to the nursery, including Ivygaze and Stoneclaw.

Softheart and Sparrowwing stood by the nursery, as did Splashleap and Runninglegs. Graystorm and Dawnfire watched their kit as she was about to give birth.

"It'll be alright," Spottedmask said, placing her paw on Morningpelt's stomach. Stonecloud stood beside Morningpelt as she screeched in pain.

"Sh, it'll be okay," Stonecloud whispered to his mate. The ginger she-cat nodded, trying to ignore the pain that ached her.

"The first one's coming," Morningpelt gasped.

She screeched as the first kit was born. A gray tabby she-cat was born. Stonecloud began to lick the kit. "How many more?" Morningpelt groaned.

Sandpaw felt Morningpelt's stomach. "Two," she replied.

"You can do it," Stonecloud said. "You already gave birth to one. You can give birth to two more."

Morningpelt screeched as another was born. A spotted she-cat. Spottedmask began to lick the kit.

Two she-cats snuggled up close to Morningpelt now. "Just one more," Stonecloud said.

Morningpelt screeched as the final was born. A small black tortoiseshell tom who was obviously the runt of the litter. He was smaller than the others.

"You're done," Sandpaw said.

"Beautiful," Stoneclaw said.

"Thank you," Morningpelt said, gazing over her three beautiful kits.

"What will we call them?" Stonecloud asked.

Morningpelt smiled. "Let's call the gray tabby she-cat, Minnowkit. You name the other two."

Stonecloud smiled, looking over his other two kits. "The spotted one will be Cheetahkit. And the tom will be Mottledkit."

"Lovely names," Sparrowwing purred.

They left to let Morningpelt take care of her three kits.

Ivygaze padded to Stonecloud, lightly nudging him.

"They're beautiful, Stonecloud. Let's hope you can handle three," Cottonnose said.

Ivygaze rolled her eyes.

"Well you handled three," Stoneclaw said to Ivygaze. "Your mother handled four."

Cottonnose laughed. "Yes, she did. Well, it was mostly Skycloud, but still. Skycloud handled five kits plus her own."

Ivygaze nodded.

"Skycloud was an amazing cat," Cottonnose said.

"She was," a voice came.

They turned, seeing Cindertail, one of Skycloud's kits.

"I never knew she had been captured," Cindertail said. "I never even knew that she and Mossclaw had become mates. But she was one of the most bravest cats ever."

Ivygaze nodded.

"It's a shame that she barely raised you," Cottonnose said.

Cindertail smiled. "I know. But I'm not angry that she raised you. You four had to grow up without a mother. Mintfall had to grow up without a mother or father. Well, I better be off now." The light gray tabby she-cat padded off.

"That was weird," Cottonnose said.

Snowtail padded up towards them. "Cindertail is an odd cat. Would you like to go hunting, Cottonnose?"

Cottonnose nodded. "Good-bye," he said, waving his tail.

He left Stoneclaw and Ivygaze alone. "Hunting?" Stoneclaw suggested.

Ivygaze nodded. They padded into the woods after Cottonnose and Snowtail. "Wait up!" Stoneclaw laughed. For once, Stoneclaw thought back to when he was a fox. When Daisy, Arrow, Lily, and him had all been hunting. He missed those days.

Chapter 36

Awhile had passed. Morningpelt's kits were already apprentices. It had felt like forever ago when they had been born. None of Ivygaze's other kits had kits except Stonecloud. Stonecloud had turned out to be an excellent father. His kits adored him.

Spottedmask had retired. Sandpaw's full medicine cat name had become Sandheart. She had taken on an older cat, Spiritheart, as her apprentice. Spiritheart was much older than Sandheart, but he wanted to end his warrior duties and become a medicine cat. It was his dream.

Stoneclaw sat next to Ivygaze in camp. The two were sharing a freshly caught squirrel. Stoneclaw smiled. Ivygaze smiled as well. The two had been more close than ever these days. Ivygaze didn't have kits to watch over, so they had been doing more activities together.

Cottonnose padded up to the two. Ivygaze let out a nod. Stoneclaw sat, confused. They were obviously talking in their heads.

"Let's go hunting," Cottonnose said. "Do you mind if Snowtail comes along?"

"No, it's fine," Stoneclaw said.

It was the end of new-leaf. Green-leaf was upon them once again. At this time the previous year, Stoneclaw would've just returned home to SnowClan.

The four padded into the woods. Stoneclaw stopped, seeing a rabbit. He went to jump when Cottonnose scared it off.

"Thanks, Cottonnose!" Stoneclaw groaned.

Cottonnose laughed. "We aren't here to hunt."

"But we're hunting," Snowtail said. Obviously, she was as confused as Stoneclaw.

"We're going to the meadow to talk," said Cottonnose. Ivygaze nodded.

Shrugging at Snowtail, the four padded to the meadow to have a discussion. Stoneclaw smiled, feeling the dry grass on his paws. He loved being in the meadow. It always brought happiness to him for some reason.

They sat in the tall grass. "This grass is wet!" Snowtail

complained.

Cottonnose rolled his eyes. "Take my seat. It's dry."

Snowtail nodded, exchanging seats with her mate.

"Why are we all here, then?" Stoneclaw asked.

"We have some important news," Cottonnose said.

"We?" Stoneclaw asked. "As in, you and Snowtail?"

Cottonnose shook his head. "No, we as in, Ivygaze and I."

"What is it?" Stoneclaw growled. What was the big news? Were they retiring and becoming elders? Were they running off as kittypets? The possibilities were endless!

"Ivygaze is expecting your kits, Stoneclaw," Cottonnose said.

Stoneclaw's mouth formed a perfect O.

"Congratulations!" Snowtail said.

Stoneclaw couldn't believe it. Was it true? "No," Stoneclaw said. "You're playing pranks on me. You're lying."

Ivygaze shook her head.

"You really are expecting kits?" Stoneclaw asked.

Ivygaze nodded.

"That's great!" Stoneclaw gasped. He nuzzled his mate. "But wait, you said you would never have kits again."

Ivygaze's whiskers twitched in amusement and she shrugged.

"Do her kits know yet?" Stoneclaw asked Cottonnose.

Cottonnose shook his head. "No one knows yet. Only us four. Now, why don't we go back and tell the clan!"

Snowtail nodded. As they padded back, Snowtail went into a long talk with Ivygaze.

"Wow, a second litter? You're a much older cat too. They'll have to be extra careful with you. I wonder how many you'll have! Maybe you'll have all she-cats this time! Oh, but what if you just have toms? Who knows?!"

Cottonnose laughed as did Stoneclaw. They arrived back into camp in no time, padding towards Cloudstar's den.

"What is it?" Cloudstar asked.

"Ivygaze is expecting kits!" Stoneclaw gasped.

"That's great!" Cloudstar said. His mate, Dovewing, who was also an older cat, had given birth shortly after Morningpelt. He had all toms, and his kits were also apprentices. "I'll tell the clan," he said, padding out of his den.

"ALL CATS OLD ENOUGH TO CATCH THEIR OWN PREY,

JOIN BENEATH THE TALL ROCK FOR A CLAN MEETING!" he yowled.

The cats gathered, confused on what he was announcing. There were no warrior or apprentice ceremonies for moons.

"I have some very exciting news," he began. "Ivygaze is expecting another litter of kits!"

The clan cheered for Ivygaze. Ivygaze looked down, embarassed from all the attention. As the cats went off to perform duties, Ivygaze's three kits ran to her.

"You're having more kits?!" Runninglegs gasped. "They better not replace us!"

Ivygaze shook her head, laughing.

"Congratulations, Mother," Softheart purred.

Stonecloud dipped his head and nodded. "I wish you good luck. You too, Stoneclaw. This is your first time being a father, correct?"

"Yes," Stoneclaw lied. He couldn't tell Stonecloud he had been a father before and failed. He still had nightmares about it.

Stoneclaw licked Ivygaze's cheek and smiled.

The hot rays of green-leaf beat down on the camp. Green-leaf had arrived, bringing a fresh source of prey to the cats. Since it was green-leaf though, the water level had gone down in the river and the falls. They were low on water.

Ivygaze was days away from giving birth to Stoneclaw's kits. Sandheart had payed extra attention to her since she was an older cat. It would be Ivygaze's last litter, of course.

On one particularly hot day, Stoneclaw was just bringing in some squirrel from the hunting patrol he was on when he heard Ivygaze's screech from the nursery. Dropping the fresh squirrel, Stoneclaw gasped, running to the nursery.

Sandheart allowed him in as Ivygaze sat, ready to give birth. Stoneclaw noticed Cottonnose and Snowtail, Fuzzytail, and Ivygaze's three kits outside the nursery. Ivygaze gasped in pain.

"It's alright," Stoneclaw said. He wasn't there when Lily gave birth, so he was exactly sure how to act towards Ivygaze.

"Just breathe," Sandheart said.

Ivygaze gasped and yowled. Sandheart placed a stick in her mouth, so that Ivygaze could bite down when the pain came.

Ivygaze gasped as a white and black she-cat was born.

Sandheart felt Ivygaze's belly. "That's all," she said.

"A beautiful she-cat," Spiritheart, the medicine cat apprentice, said.

Ivygaze licked the kit affectionately.

"She's beautiful," Stoneclaw said, smiling at his new daughter. He would not let anything happen to her. He would not fail like he had done when he was raising Lily's kits.

"She wants you to name her," Cottonnose said.

"How about, Badgerkit?" Stoneclaw suggested.

Ivygaze nodded, licking the she-cat. Badgerkit opened her eyes. They were a lovely blue. "Hello, Badgerkit," Stoneclaw whispered. The she-cat mewed, smiling at her father.

Ivygaze's whiskers twitched in amusement. She nudged the she-cat gently and Badgerkit fell asleep next to her mother.

That night, Stoneclaw was full of happiness. The birth of his daughter had made him the happiest he had ever been. He closed his eyes, instantly drifting off to sleep.

He awoke in StarClan. His first instinct was that he was dead. "Hello?" he called. "Am I dead?"

He smiled as Stonecloud walked forward. "No, Stoneclaw. You're not dead. Congratulations on the birth of you daughter. She is lovely."

"Thank you, Stonecloud," Stoneclaw said, dipping his head to the white she-cat.

"I suppose you want to know why I am here," Stonecloud said.

"A little," Stoneclaw laughed. "Where's Icestar?"

"She's out and about. Stoneclaw, when you were erased from the foxes' minds, their spirits were preserved here. But they are going to vanish very soon. This is probably the last time you will ever see them," Stonecloud said.

"You mean...Lily and the kits are here?!"

"Arrow, Chase, Rock, Daisy, and her kits too. Everyone is here. All the foxes you knew. Once they dissapear forever, that will be it. They'll be gone, lost in a world of distant memories, never able to escape."

"I want to see them," Stoneclaw said.

The white she-cat nodded, leading him into the forest. He picked up a familiar scent. It was Lily!

"Wait," Stonecloud said. "Before you go to them, let me

change you into a fox. The spell will only last for a short amount of time, so say your good-byes fast."

Stoneclaw nodded, feeling himself change into the familiar shape of a fox. He smiled as he saw his familiar ginger fur.

"LILY!" he screeched.

"Stone!" the ginger fox ran to him. "I thought you wouldn't ever come to see us before we vanished forever."

"Of course I would come, Lily. I love you," he said.

"I love you too," Lily replied. "I'm going to miss you so much, Stone. Thank you for erasing us from our current fox minds. You did a brave thing."

"It was nothing," Stone said. "I'll miss you too. I'll never forget you."

"Neither will I," she smiled.

"DADDY!"

Stone laughed as his four kits ran to him. He noticed the unfamiliar one. It was Heat, the one he had never known. "Hazelnut, Bumblebee, Honey, and...Heat," he said.

"You never knew me," Heat said.

"I know," Stone replied. "But it's great to see you now!"

"We'll miss you, Daddy," Honey said.

"I'll miss you too. Be good for your mother," Stone said.

"We will!" Hazelnut said.

Stone smiled, padding off to Arrow and Daisy. Sunshine, Meadow, Arrow, and Pebble stood by them too.

"I still miss those days that we ran off and hunted," Stone said.

"We'll miss them too," Daisy said.

"Thank you for taking the arrow for me," Stone said to Arrow.

"It was nothing, Stone. I wanted you to be safe. Thanks for being an awesome friend," Arrow replied.

"I'll miss you, Arrow, Daisy, and the kits."

"We'll miss you too!" Pebble squeaked.

Lastly, Stone padded off to Rock and Chase. "Thank you for showing me how to be a fox," he said.

"It was our pleasure," Chase said. Rock nodded.

A bright light flashed, indicating the spell was about to wear off. "I'LL NEVER FORGET YOU!" he yowled.

He opened his eyes, back in StarClan. But this time, not

only Stonecloud was there, but his whole family.

"Mother!" Stoneclaw yowled, running to the ginger she-cat.

"Hello, Stoneclaw," Sandnose said.

"Thank you for protecting me," Stoneclaw said. "I'm sorry that I always thought negative of you."

"It wasn't your fault," Sandnose said. "You never knew."

"Father!" Stoneclaw gasped, running to Pebblefoot.

"You have done well, Stoneclaw. I am very proud of you," Pebblefoot said.

"Thank you, Father," Stoneclaw replied.

He glanced, seeing Angelpelt and Goldentail. They let out a gentle smile. He turned to see Littlekit and Goosepaw, waving their tails at him. Lastly, he looked at Snowflower and her mate with their two kits.

"We'll be waiting for you, Stoneclaw," Sandnose said.

"I'll be waiting to see you too," Stoneclaw smiled. His beautiful family faded out. But it was alright. He would see them soon. They would always be there in StarClan forever...

Epilogue

Stoneclaw sat in the elders' den with Ivygaze, Cottonnose, and Snowtail. Moons had passed. They were old cats and had retired, becoming elders.

"BADGERCLAW! BADGERCLAW!" the clan yowled. Stoneclaw smiled at his kit. She would be a great warrior. He watched as Badgerclaw exited the rock and ran to Milknose. Milknose was the cat she loved. He smiled as he heard Milknose ask Badgerclaw to be his mate.

Badgerclaw had been raised well. She had a mother and father who loved her so. Her best friend, Fogpaw, smiled at her. The two had been friends since birth.

As for other news, Softheart had given birth to two she-cats, Fernpaw and Creampaw. Creampaw was a cream colored she-cat, while Fernpaw was a brown tabby she-cat who took after her father, Sparrowwing.

Splashleap had also given birth to two wonderful kits. Runninglegs was a great father.

It was obvious that Ivygaze was proud of her four kits. She loved them all the same, giving them equal attention and love.

Stoneclaw smiled, nudging Ivygaze with his paw. "Remember when we all played as kits?"

It had been so long ago when they had been kits, playing in the nursery. Stoneclaw had gone through so much since then.

Ivygaze nodded. Cottonnose laughed, recalling all the memories they had shared.

As night fell upon the clan, Stoneclaw curled up next to Ivygaze. He loved her so much. He always would. But he loved Lily too. He loved Ivygaze and Lily the same, no matter what happened.

Closing his eyes, Stoneclaw fell into an everlasting dream. He was stuck in darkness, but the darkness subsided as a familiar white she-cat walked forward.

The clan leader smiled at the kit she had raised. "Are you ready, Stoneclaw?"

Stoneclaw nodded, padding forward to the clan leader. He smiled as he saw Ivygaze curling up next to him. He gave one last

glance that way, then padded off to Icestar where he would walk with the stars, returning to the ones he loved, and awaiting the ones who loved him.

THE END

Author's Note

Dear Reader,

I want to thank all of you who helped me achieve success in this book. It was your votes, fanning, comments, and reads that made me continue this book. Your heartfelt comments made me smile. You are all the inspiration for me as a writer.

You guys don't know her, but...I want to give a THANK YOU to badgerclaw29! She is amazing! I used to role-play with her on YouTube! This book is entirely based of OUR role-play. That's why Stoneclaw's kit is named Badgerclaw :) The cat, Badgerclaw, is dedicated to her :)

Thank you for making this my second most popular book on Wattpad. If you're looking for more of my Warriors books to read, I have an entire Reading List for you to scroll and find one you like. I imagine you should read *The Abandoned Warrior* if you haven't already since that one gets a lot of attention, but some personal favorites I wrote that I recommend are *Shining of the Four* and *The Search for Jetfur*.

Thank you for the support everyone!

~Maeve